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THE RISE OF CHRISTIANITY

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THE
ROMAN EMPIRE
IN THE
NEW TESTAMENT PERIOD.
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THE
RISE OF CHRISTIANITY

A HISTORICAL STUDY
OF THE
ORIGIN OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION

By
FREDERICK OWEN NORTON
Professor of New Testament Literature
Crozer Theological Seminary

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To

ERNEST DE WITT BURTON

UNDER WHOSE INSPIRATIONAL GUIDANCE
I STUDIED THE NEW TESTAMENT DOCUMENTS
AND WORKED OUT "MY GOSPEL"
THIS BOOK IS GRATEFULLY DEDICATED

PREFACE

This book is intended to present an interpretation in narrative form of the source materials for the origin and early development of Christianity. It is hoped that it may serve two purposes. By the general reader it may be read continuously as a story without attention to the source references or to the supplementary reading; by the student it may be used as a guide to the study of the most significant period of the world's history.

TO THE STUDENT

The student is advised to read a whole chapter through consecutively in order to get a comprehensive view of the subject such as will assist him in seeing the details in proper perspective, and then to read it again section by section. Before this second reading the source references should be carefully studied in the order given and as the section is read the student should recall or find again the references on which each statement of fact or of inference is based. The principal source book is the New Testament. The student should go directly to this collection of documents and should use the text-book merely as a guide to assist him in reconstructing the history from the sources. In order to emphasize the importance of this direct method of studying history the source references for each section are given at the beginning of each chapter.

After the chapter or assignment is thus worked over, parallel passages from the list of books under "supple-

mentary reading" should be read and the ideas there presented tested by the source references. Any point not yet clear to the student should be noted, and the reference books examined for assistance. The supplementary readings should be taken up in the order given, and at least half of them should be carefully read in order to give a reasonably varied point of view.

TO THE TEACHER

It should be borne in mind that the text of each chapter is not to be regarded as an exhaustive or detailed treatment of the topic. It is intended to serve as a guide to the interpretation of the source material and as an indication of what may be considered significant, or, in other words, to help the student to gain what many lack—a proper perspective.

All the supplementary reading and such other books on the subject as may be available should be examined for greater detail and illustrative and explanatory material to be given to the student in lecture and oral discussion. A list of books for this purpose together with suggested topics for investigation is given in Appendix I.

The material of this book has been tested for several years in undergraduate college classes with gratifying results. It has been found that, as a rule, one section of a chapter has ample suggestion for an hour of lecture and discussion.

The student should be required to give the source references on which each statement or inference is based. In order to do this without using a reference book, he must thoroughly master all the references given at the

beginning of each chapter—not necessarily memorizing them but making the substance his own and locating them definitely in his mind. To assist him in doing this to the best advantage, no references are given in the body of the text, and all quotations from the sources are put within quotation marks.

The quotations from the New Testament in the main follow Dr. James Moffatt's excellent translation, but I have taken the liberty of changing it and giving my own translation in part or whole wherever it has seemed desirable in order to bring out the exact meaning of the original.

After the student has made his preparation according to the suggestions in the first part of this Preface, and the topics have been finally canvassed in class, he should be required to write chapters of his own and keep these in book form to be examined and criticized from time to time by the instructor. When this is done he will have at the conclusion of the course a history of the origin of Christianity written by himself, and no matter what may be its defects, the work of putting the results of his study into this definite, constructive form will be of the greatest value to him.

It is believed that the method here outlined will assist the student in gaining a scientific approach to the study of the original documents on which the history of this momentous period is based, and especially to the New Testament.

Frederick Owen Norton

Crozer Theological Seminary
January 1, 1924

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INTRODUCTION

THE SOURCES

1. Paul's Letters
2. The First Three Gospels
3. The Book of Acts
4. The Fourth Gospel and Other Canonical Writings
5. Extra-canonical Sources

The sources for the study of the origin of Christianity are largely found in one volume, the New Testament. The main sources are the gospels, Paul's Letters, and the Book of Acts. To these should be added the early church Fathers and the very brief testimony of five non-Christian writers, one Jewish and the others Roman —Josephus, Tacitus, Pliny, Suetonius, and Lucian.

1. PAUL'S LETTERS

The earliest of the New Testament writings and the most important from a historical point of view are the letters of Paul. These were written between the years 50 and 65 A.D. Of the ten letters ordinarily attributed to Paul the genuineness of seven is practically unquestioned. These are I Thessalonians, Galatians, I and II Corinthians, Romans, Philippians, and Philemon, and these are the letters also that give us the clearest intimation of the part Paul played in the rise of Christianity. To these may be added three others: II Thessalonians, Colossians, and Ephesians, which are second to the others both because there is some question as to their genuineness and because they do not furnish as clear data for our investigation. We may also include I and

II Timothy and Titus, which, although they are not generally accepted as coming from Paul in their present form, yet probably contain some genuine Pauline elements, and in any case give some valuable hints as to the close of his life and the development of Christian thought at the time they were written.

2. THE FIRST THREE GOSPELS

The first three gospels are commonly called the Synoptic Gospels. The earliest of the group is Mark, probably written between 65 and 68 A.D. It is the shortest and most concise, and by its simplicity of style and vivid description suggesting the words of an eye-witness it bears in itself the stamp of originality and verisimilitude. Its purpose as indicated in the brief introduction, or rather title (vs. 1), was simply to write the "good news" (gospel) about Jesus who the author takes for granted is the Christ. He does not write, as does one of his successors, to prove that Jesus is the Jewish Messiah. He does not raise the question at all. He takes it for granted. He tells what he knows simply and directly.

The author of this Gospel is doubtless the John Mark mentioned in Acts and Paul's Epistles. Papias, bishop of Hierapolis, in Asia Minor (130–60 A.D.) tells us that Mark was Peter's interpreter, and wrote accurately all he remembered of what Peter used to tell of Jesus' words and deeds. The internal evidence is strongly confirmatory of this statement. He was an eye-witness of the closing events of Jesus' life in Jerusalem when a young lad (cf. Mark 14:52), and an attendant of Paul and Barnabas on the first missionary journey.

Though a Jew, he was well acquainted with the gentile world, and probably wrote his book for the use of missionaries.

The Gospel of Matthew as we have it was written in Greek with the evident purpose of confirming the faith of the Jewish Christians by showing that Jesus was the Messiah of prophecy; that he had come to the Jews proclaiming the immediate advent of the Kingdom of God and explaining its nature; that the Jews had rejected him, and that in consequence he had founded a universal kingdom, the true successor of the Old Testament religion and yet absolutely independent of Judaism. The purpose is indicated by the first verse and the citations of Old Testament prophecy as purposely fulfilled in specific instances in the life of Jesus, the repeated warnings against his rejection, the scathing denunciation of the religious leaders, his triumphal Resurrection after his rejection, and his commission to his disciples to "go and make disciples of all nations."

Papias says: "Matthew wrote the sayings (*logia*) of the Lord in Hebrew (Aramaic) and everyone interpreted them as he was able." Matthew as it has come to us was written in Greek and contains almost all the narrative material of Mark in almost the same words but often in different order, the arrangement being made evidently with the purpose of bringing together teachings on the same subject and connecting them with appropriate incidents. A comparison of this narrative material shows that Mark was the original. The internal evidence shows that Matthew was written after 70 A.D. Its probable date is 75 to 80 A.D. If one of its chief sources was the "Logia" written by the apostle Matthew,

this fact would naturally account for its name, especially if, as seems to have been the case, practically the whole of that document was incorporated into the new work.

The Third Gospel was ascribed by ancient writers dating from the middle and end of the second century to the Luke who is mentioned in the New Testament as a Greek physician and a companion of Paul. This testimony has been accepted by most modern authorities. The aim and method of the author and the sources from which he drew his materials are clearly indicated in the remarkable Prologue from which we may note the following points: (1) there were in existence many other written gospels at this time; (2) these were not written by eye-witnesses but by those who got their material from eye-witnesses; (3) Luke was one of these; he was not an eye-witness but wrote from oral and written testimony of eye-witnesses; (4) he had carefully studied out the history in detail; (5) oral teaching was a custom of the time; (6) his purpose was to tell as completely and accurately as possible from accessible materials the story of Jesus' life; (7) considerable time must have elapsed since the events had occurred, at least a generation, thirty or forty years.

An examination of Luke's Gospel indicates that he used Mark as his principal source for the life of Jesus, and that he had also in common with our First Gospel another document which contained many sayings of Jesus not recorded by Mark. In addition to these two sources he had a document or documents apparently not known to the author of the First Gospel, and probably made more use than he of the oral testimony of

eye-witnesses. This Gospel and our Matthew were probably written about the same time and independently of each other.

3. THE BOOK OF ACTS

This work was written about fifty years after the Crucifixion. Christianity had spread from Jerusalem over the Roman Empire. Luke, the Greek physician, the companion and friend of Paul who had written the carefully ordered story of Jesus' life, now wrote another treatise to bring his story down to date and to commend Christianity to the officials of the Roman government by showing that while its leaders had been persecuted by the Jews they had invariably been exonerated from all blame and protected by the Roman government. He tells especially the story of the trials and triumphs of his friend Paul from Jerusalem throughout the Roman Empire to Rome, showing that opposition to Paul's work came entirely from the jealousy of the Jews while he had been honored and protected by the Roman officials.

It is probably because it does not accord with his purpose and for the obvious reason that it would not have been safe or politic to censure the imperial government that Luke draws the curtain before the cruel tragedy of Paul's execution under the bloody Nero. As he was an eye-witness of much that he related in this treatise, and no doubt used his careful method of investigation into all that he did not witness, his work is an exceedingly valuable source for the account of the beginnings of the church, and for Paul's life second only to Paul's own letters.

4. THE FOURTH GOSPEL AND OTHER CANONICAL WRITINGS

The author of the Gospel of John was probably acquainted with all three of the Synoptic Gospels and with Paul's letters. He does not aim to tell the story of Jesus' life. He takes it for granted. He attempts to explain Jesus' life in conformity with the philosophic ideas current in Asia Minor at the end of the first century. His purpose, as expressed in the thirty-first verse of chapter 20, was to keep Christians from forsaking Christianity because of false ideas about God's relation to the world, ideas which did away with Jesus' work as a mediator.

The discourses attributed to Jesus seem to have been reproduced as they had been worked over in meditation through many years of contact with the philosophical problems of the day, and had become an integral part of the author's own thought. They are given as direct quotation because of the author's belief that the Holy Spirit spoke directly through him, according to his report of Jesus' saying: "The Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name will teach you everything and recall to you everything I have said." This work was probably written at Ephesus about the year 100 A.D.

The other books of the New Testament, written for the most part later than those we have enumerated as our principal sources, are interesting for the light they throw on conditions of life and thought among the early Christians, but do not add anything important to our knowledge of the historical facts. The most important for our purpose are the Apocalypse and Hebrews, both

written about the close of the first century, as giving us the reaction of Christian thought to the shocking persecution under Nero, the cruel attempts to enforce emperor-worship under Domitian, and the dangers of apostasy and indifference as the years passed on and the day of the Lord's long-expected return did not come.

5. EXTRA-CANONICAL SOURCES

The early church Fathers writing from about 95 A.D. constitute our chief sources for the history of the development of the early church after the close of the Apostolic age. This literature is very voluminous. The most valuable documents for our purpose are the letter of Clement of Rome to the church at Corinth, deprecating trouble that had arisen there and protesting against the ousting from office of certain presbyters (*ca.* 95); the letters of Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, to several churches in Asia Minor when a prisoner on his way to Rome for martydrom (*ca.* 115); the so-called "Teaching of the Twelve Apostles," a church manual of service and discipline (*ca.* 130); and the "Apologies," of Justin Martyr, or literary defenses of Christianity against heathen criticism (*ca.* 155). To these should be added the writings of the "Father of Church History," Eusebius of Caesarea, an indefatigable compiler of historical data, who had access to many original documents that have since been lost, and who wrote in the first half of the fourth century both before and after the Council of Nicea (325).

There are some fragments of early uncanonical gospels that are interesting by way of comparison with the synoptic accounts—notably the Gospel according to the

Hebrews and the Gospel of Peter, probably from the early part of the second century. Besides these there are many apocryphal gospel stories which have no claim to serious consideration as historical sources.

The Catacombs, or great underground cemeteries at Rome with about 400 miles of galleries and many relics, symbolic pictures, and inscriptions, bear witness to the life and faith of a community that accepted our gospel narratives. These tombs seem to have been used by the early Christians not only for the purpose of burial of their dead but also in times of persecution as places of refuge and worship. While the largest number belong to the third century and the early part of the fourth, several of them date from the latter part of the first century and a considerable number from the second. Among the mural decorations, some of which date from the second century, have been found besides such symbols as the Vine, the Good Shepherd, the Sheep, the Fish, etc., pictures illustrating such events as the Visit of the Wise Men, the Healing of the Paralytic, the Feeding of the Five Thousand, and the Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem.

Five non-Christian writers, one Jewish and four Roman, during the century from 70 A.D to 170 A.D. make brief incidental allusions to Jesus or the early Christians. They are Josephus, Tacitus, Pliny, Suetonius, and Lucian. Besides these the Mishna, the Jewish record of traditional law, contains many references to Jesus without mentioning his name, using such epithets as "that man," "the Nazarene," "the one hanged," "the fool," "the son of the stake."

Josephus' reference is in his record of the death of James whom he differentiates as "the brother of Jesus,

the so-called Messiah." This was written about 75 A.D. Suetonius writing about 120 A.D. says that Emperor Claudius "expelled the Jews from Rome because they were constantly raising a tumult at the instigation of *Chrestus*." There was a confusion of the names Chrestus and Christus among the Romans at that time. Suetonius also says in another connection that "the Christians, adherents of a new and magical superstition, were severely punished." Lucian the satirist about 170 refers to the founder of the Christian cult as "a man who had been fixed to a stake in Palestine and who was still worshiped for having introduced a new code of morals in life." He further says that this man persuaded his followers that they were brothers and that they would live forever.

Pliny the Younger about 112 A.D. wrote to the Emperor Trajan asking for instruction as to how to deal with the Christians in his province of Bithynia. He says he had gathered from witnesses that

> The sum of their guilt was to assemble on a fixed day before daybreak and sing responsively hymns to Christ as to a god and to bind themselves with an oath not to enter into any wickedness or commit thefts, robberies or adulteries or to falsify their work or to repudiate trusts committed to them. When these things were ended it was their custom to depart and on coming together again to take food, men and women together, yet innocently.

The most important of all these non-Christian references is that of the Roman historian Tacitus, who in his *Annals*, written before 115 A.D., says:

> In order to suppress the rumor [that he himself had set fire to Rome] Nero falsely accused and punished with acute torture persons who, already hated for their shameful deeds, were commonly called Christians. The founder of that name, Christus, had been put to death by the procurator Pontius Pilate in the

reign of Tiberius; but the deadly superstition though suppressed for a time broke out again not only throughout Judea where the evil had its origin but also through the City [Rome] whither all things horrible and vile from all quarters flow and are encouraged; accordingly first those were arrested who confessed, then on their information a great multitude was convicted not so much of the crime of incendiarism as of hatred of the human race.

Meager as is the testimony of these non-Christian writers, it is sufficient to establish several leading facts, namely, that the founder of Christianity whose name was Jesus, and who was called the Christ lived in Judea during the reign of Tiberius, that he was condemned to death and crucified by the Roman procurator, Pontius Pilate, and that his influence was such that his followers gave up their lives for his cause.

SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS

1. Burton and Mathews, *The Life of Christ*, pp. 17–25.
2. Stevens, *The Teaching of Jesus*, pp. 19–32.
3. Burton, *A Short Introduction to the Gospels*, pp. 8–20, 30–41, 52–63, 94–98, 128–37.
4. Case, *The Historicity of Jesus*, pp. 238–70.
5. Kent, *The Life and Teachings of Jesus*, pp. 1–33.
6. Kent, *The Work and Teachings of the Apostles*, pp. 2–8.
7. Bennett and Adeney, *Biblical Introduction*, pp. 277–467.
8. Gilbert, *Jesus*, pp. 3–84.
9. Bartlet, *The Apostolic Age*, pp. xviii–xxiii.

CHAPTER I

THE GENERAL FIELD

THE ROMAN-GRECIAN WORLD

1. Necessity for This Study
   Mark 6:14–29; 7:1–16; 12:18; 14:43; Matt. 2:1–6; 3:1, 7; 26:3–5; 27:2; Luke 1:5; 3:1, 2
2. Universal Empire
   Luke 2:1, 2; 23:38; Acts 1:8; 2:5–11; I Pet. 1:1; Horace *Ep.* ii. 1. 156, 157; Plutarch *Miscellanies* (Goodwin's ed.) i. 249
3. Means of Communication
   Acts 11:19; 13:4–6, 13, 14; 16:6–12; 19:1, 21; 21:1–17, 27, 28
4. Political and Social Conditions
   Mark 15:1; Matt. 2:19–23; 27:65; Acts 13:7; 21:31–40; 24:27; 25:11, 12; 13:1; Rom. 13:1–7
5. Religion and Morality
   Acts 17:16–34; Rom. 1:18–32; I Cor. 2:6–10; 8:1–13; Phil. 3:19; Eph. 5:32; Col. 1:26, 27

1. NECESSITY FOR THIS STUDY

In order to understand the significance of any great historical movement, one must have some idea of the conditions under which it originated, the state of the world at the time, and the thoughts and aspirations of men. This is especially true when the time is two thousand years removed from ours and the customs and ideas of men consequently so unfamiliar. This background or setting is not given in the New Testament. It is taken for granted. The writers wrote for the people of their own time and left much to be understood. We must reconstruct the background and supply the mind-content of the writers and of those to whom they wrote, if

we would understand their motives and even become adequately acquainted with the historical facts they discuss.

This necessity of reconstructing the background may be illustrated by the case of receiving a letter from a friend at the present time. If you know him well and know the place from which he writes and its people, there may be many allusions and even categorical statements which you understand easily but which to another who is unacquainted with your friend and the place from which he writes are utterly unintelligible. You can "read between the lines" because there is a common mind-content between you and your friend which is unknown to others. In the case of an ancient writer like Paul this must be supplied. We must become acquainted with his mind-content and with that of the persons he addresses and have some idea of the customs, beliefs, characteristics, and conditions of the age in which he wrote. Hence arises the necessity for a brief study of the world out of which Christianity arose.

In the case of Christianity this study is that of a threefold world, for while its founder was a Hebrew and spoke Aramaic, he was crucified by Roman soldiers, the inscription on the Cross was reported to have been written in Hebrew (Aramaic), Greek, and Latin, and the story of his life was written in Greek. His greatest follower was a Jew but spoke and wrote Greek, was a Roman citizen, and his field of operations was the Roman Empire.

2. UNIVERSAL EMPIRE

In Luke's story of the birth of Jesus we read: "There went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the

world should be taxed." This text suggests the day of universal empire. The task of uniting the multiplied discordant nationalities of the ancient world, grouped for the most part around the shores of the Mediterranean Sea, was begun by Alexander the Great (334–323 B.C.), who carried the advanced civilization and culture of the Greeks with him into Asia and Africa, thus mingling Eastern and Western civilizations and opening the way for intercommunication through all parts of the historic world of his day. The wonderful vitality and aggressiveness of the Greek language and culture were more searching and permanent than Alexander's military conquests. This Greek language and culture as modified by contact with so many and diverse nationalities has been called "Hellenistic" in distinction from the Classic Greek language and culture known as Hellenic.

Alexander did not aim simply at political conquest. His ambition was to establish a permanent world-empire by fusing all nationalities into one. The marvelous success of his brief decade of operations is seen from the persistence of the Hellenistic language and culture and the consequent ease of intercourse between the different parts of his hastily constructed world-empire long after its political disruption, in fact through almost three centuries of the rule of Alexander's successors (the Diadochi) and their descendants (the Epigoni) until the process of world-unification was taken up again by Rome in the conquest of Macedonia and Greece in 146, Syria in 64, and Egypt in 30 B.C. Even then, when all Hellenistic political domination had disappeared, the Greek language and culture made conquest of the conquerors, and prevailed over the Latin civilization of Rome so that the

world-culture in the midst of which Christianity took its rise was Hellenistic rather than Roman.

> When Greece was captive led, her captor fierce
> She tamed, and brought her arts to rustic Rome.

The Greeks did not try to obliterate the national characteristics of the conquered peoples, whether political, social, or religious; they absorbed or assimilated them, and their own civilization was modified and broadened and made cosmopolitan by the process.

At the time of the birth of Jesus, the political control of the world-empire of the Greeks had passed to the Romans, and about twenty-five years before (31 B.C.) Rome had acquired the symbol of organic unity in the person of the great Emperor Octavius Augustus, who by his overthrow of Antony in the battle of Actium had brought to an end fourteen years of bloody civil strife. Thus was inaugurated a period of unexampled peace and prosperity which continued during the whole of his long reign (31 B.C.–14 A.D.); and the stable government of Rome thus established remained throughout the reigns of the early emperors, from Augustus' successor, Tiberius (14–37), to Marcus Aurelius (161–80). According to Plutarch, when the famous sigh of Alexander over the fact that there were no more worlds to conquer was mentioned in Augustus' presence, he expressed surprise that the work of setting a world in order was not regarded as a greater task than making a world-conquest. At any rate, this seems to have been the worthy task to which he applied his great genius, and during his reign the Romans turned their energies from conquest to organization and unification.

The Empire now embraced all the known world, from the borders of India to the Pillars of Hercules, and from the North Sea to the first cataract of the Nile—the region of the Euphrates in the east, Egypt, and all Northern Africa in the south, all Western Europe from Spain and Britain to the German provinces. The work of world-unification begun by Alexander was thus carried on by Augustus with much better opportunities for success. The Roman Empire became the "melting pot" in which were fused all the discordant nationalities of antiquity into a political unit that was Roman and a civilization that was Greek or rather the modified broadened, cosmopolitan Greek known as Hellenistic.

3. MEANS OF COMMUNICATION

The ease with which this civilization permeated the world was caused by the stable government and means of communication established by the strong hand of Rome. The sea was cleared of pirates for the first time in history. The famous Roman roads (still existing and forming the foundations of the best modern roads of Europe), constructed in this period in such a manner as to connect all the provinces, made communication easier than ever before, and were one of the chief unifying factors, for "all roads led to Rome." Good bridges were built where needed, with walls and castles to guard them, and there were inns at regular intervals where one could change horses.

These conveniences were primarily for the imperial troops, but were used by the people of all nationalities traveling for business or pleasure—merchants and artisans traveling between Alexandria, Rome, Corinth,

Ephesus, Tarsus, Antioch, and other great centers looking for work or trade; Roman officials and soldiers and recruits from all countries to join the imperial army; university students coming from large cities of the Empire to Athens, Alexandria, and Tarsus; travelers for pleasure just as at the present time; wealthy Romans seeking health at famous baths and springs or going away for the heated term to cooler climates or to the Olympic Games. In fact, travel was as general as now, and the first century, in this respect, much like the twentieth.

Perhaps the greatest factor in this unifying process was the Greek language. It was carried over the historic world of that day by the conquests of Alexander, and because of its natural vitality and high degree of development, it prevailed over all tongues with which it came in contact, and became the common language of commerce, culture, and society. It was not displaced by Latin under Roman domination. In fact, wherever the two languages came into contact, Greek prevailed over Latin as the language of culture and commerce. While Latin was used by the soldiers and in the law courts, this common or Hellenistic Greek was the popular language of Syria, Palestine, and Egypt. Even at Rome it was necessary to speak Greek for all who desired to be considered intellectual and even well-equipped for business.

Aelius Aristides, the rhetorician, writing about the middle of the second century A.D., says of the Greeks:

> They celebrate a far greater triumph than that on the field of Marathon in the recognition of their language. All states and all races of men have yielded to the spread of our speech and to

our way of life. It does not stop at the Pillars of Hercules and neither the Lycian desert nor the Bosporean Strait have set a limit to it; but as if by Divine Providence an ardent desire for our wisdom and civilization has seized upon all the world. Our language is now recognized as the common one and through it the whole earth is become intelligible in the same utterance.

The peoples did not, however, give up their native tongues entirely. They were bilingual, as is the case in Wales and parts of Canada. The native tongue was spoken at home, but on the streets and in business and travel Greek was used.

4. POLITICAL AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS

The Romans did not interfere with a conquered people's customs and institutions further than was necessary for good administration. Their policy was in many respects similar to that of Britain toward India or South Africa. They were satisfied if the authority of the Empire was recognized, and the tribute promptly paid. The Roman administration affected very little the social and religious conditions of the provinces. They were under Roman governors (proconsuls, propraetors, procurators) or vassal kings, and owed political allegiance to Rome, but no attempt was made to change their customs or religion. In Judea, for example, full religious liberty was enjoyed, and the sanctity of the Temple was guaranteed. The native courts or Sanhedrin had the ordinary jurisdiction, and could make arrests and try and condemn to any punishment except death.

There were garrisons of Roman soldiers at principal points to maintain order and enforce good government in the province. Taxes and customs were collected, but a large part of the money was spent in the province on

public improvements. These imposts were "farmed," and naturally the collectors called "publicans" in the New Testament were hated. On the whole, however, for that age the Roman government was good, and a spirit of loyalty to the Empire was general. Those who were fortunate enough to be citizens were proud of the fact, for, in that day, "to be a Roman was to be a king." Paul, when writing to the Romans, could say that "the powers that be are ordained of God" and "rulers are not a terror to good works but to evil."

A wholesome fear of Roman power was a great influence in maintaining good order, and Paul says Rome "bears not the sword in vain." It is true that the Jews resented very grievously the imposition of taxes, but there were many who appreciated the stable government of Rome, and the prosperous classes generally within the Empire were ready to hail the emperor as a savior and even as a god.

The conditions of life in the Roman Empire were not so different from ours as is commonly supposed. As has been indicated, the people of various parts of the Empire mingled freely together, even more freely than at the present time, and there was a common world-view and commercial enterprise that compares favorably with ours. We get some very interesting glimpses into the life of this period by means of the abundant material furnished by the recently discovered papyri. Here are preserved letters and other common documents such as wills and contracts depicting everyday life in a very realistic fashion—family relationships, travel, soldiers in camps writing home—all phases of life remarkably similar to those of the present day.

5. RELIGION AND MORALITY

The Graeco-Roman world was by no means without religion. When Paul visited Athens he found the people "uncommonly religious." The cities were full of temples, shrines, and objects of worship, and even in the fields and forests were to be found sanctuaries of deities. Every significant period in the life of the individual and of the state was inaugurated with religious ceremonies.

1. The most primitive form of religion was the nationalistic. Each tribe had its own god who was concerned not with the individual but the general welfare—the founding of cities, making war, the food supply, etc. These religions were polytheistic, there being a distinct god for every national activity. When the world was made a political unit under Roman rule, the cult of the emperor was added to the old national religions. This was Rome's contribution to religion. It was a purely political or state religion, intended not to displace local religions nor compel unity of religious doctrine but to strengthen the political unity and authority of the Empire by means of a definite symbol of loyalty. The ignorant took this cult seriously, of course. The intelligent classes undoubtedly smiled at the religious phase of emperor-worship, and regarded it simply as civil homage.

In the Graeco-Roman world at the beginning of Christianity, polytheism was in a state of decay It was the religion of the childhood of the race. It did not meet men's deep and vital spiritual needs. It was concerned only with the material things of life—food, health, safety. When men sought deliverance from sorrow, sin, and

death, and hope for a life beyond, there came no answer. With the common people polytheism degenerated into gross superstition, and with the educated classes it became an object of ridicule. The priests sought in vain to stem the tide of discontent which resulted in empty temples and impoverished shrines. These religions had no message for the individual heart, and when collectivism gave way to individualism, there was a religious chaos which led to fatalism and weariness of life.

> On that hard pagan world disgust
> And secret loathing fell;
> Deep weariness and sated lust
> Made human life a hell.

As invariably happens, and as well illustrated in modern times by the French Revolution, morality broke down with religion. Gluttony, divorce, and unbridled licentiousness were common. Paul's graphic picture of the gross immorality of the Graeco-Roman Empire in the first chapter of his Letter to the Romans needs no commentary. We are glad to pass over the disgusting details. Slavery increased the immoral conditions as always by fostering idleness; and the slaves pandered often willingly to the lust of their owners. All work was done by slave labor. The theater, at first given to the performance of grave tragedy teaching life-lessons of virtue, fortitude, and humility, was now given over to the portrayal of indecency and vice. In fact, the words of Paul are particularly appropriate applied to the society people of that day when he said that "their God was their appetite and their glory was in their shame."

However, religion and morality were not dead. There was a great deal of popular preaching and protest

against evil conditions. One class of preachers came from above and appealed especially to the intellectual, another from below and appealed especially to the common people.

2. The philosophers were the professed seekers after truth. They helped to break down the old polytheistic faiths by teaching men to think and reason. The two leading systems of philosophy were Epicureanism and Stoicism. Epicureanism was chiefly notable for its criticism of the older ideas. It was frankly materialistic and aimed to free men from superstitious fear by explaining natural phenomena on purely physical grounds. While not denying the existence of gods, it taught that if such beings existed they could have no power over men and would not be interested in them. There was no such thing as fate, and no need to fear the future as death was the end of all. It taught that the chief good was pleasure, not the pleasure of the moment but the enjoyment of tranquility and happiness brought about by living the right kind of life.

Stoicism, a highly ethical, monotheistic idealism, taught that the highest good was virtue, and that man should "abstain and endure" and live a virtuous life. In so doing he carries out the divine will, which is the supreme task of life. Logos or Divine Reason unites man to God, and all men partake of the nature of God in so far as the Logos enters into them and they follow its guidance. Stoicism had many points of similarity to Christianity. If one may judge from their writings, its adherents, such as Epictetus, Seneca, and Marcus Aurelius, were "not far from the Kingdom of God." But philosophy also failed to meet the needs of ordinary

men. It was a religion for strong men, while ordinary mortals needed a religion of help and hope. Stoicism taught man to rely on himself, to be calm, self-possessed and self-sufficient and unmoved by human suffering.

3. It was this individual heart-cry of the common people which the mystery religions coming from the East sought to answer. Precise teachings and details of the rituals and ceremonial observances of these cults are shrouded in obscurity for several reasons. The classic writers give them scant attention because they despised them as religions of the lower classes, the contemporary Christian writers cannot be depended on to give them unbiased notice because they hated them as heathen religions, and the rites were not well known outside of the cults themselves because the initiates were pledged to secrecy.

There are, however, several characteristics common to all these religions which may be stated with certainty. They were founded on a story (mystery) of a god's life, death, and coming to life again. They were not national but individual and universal. The initiates founded societies or brotherhoods. There were sacred meals, ablutions, and solemn rites performed in retreat by the initiated with the object of bringing the worshiper into a state of enthusiasm or ecstasy in which he had communion with the god. The central idea of all these cults was redemption, deliverance from death, and the hope of a glorious immortality by means of union with the god.

Brief mention of the best known of the mystery religions will serve to illustrate their general character.

a) The Eleusinian mysteries of Greece centered in the worship of Demeter or Mother-Earth, the source of

life in nature whose sorrow at the carrying-off of her daughter Persephone into the lower world caused all nature to die, and whose joy at her restoration to the upper world for the summer brought life again upon the earth.

b) In the worship of Dionysus, the Greek god of agriculture and especially of the vine, union with the god was secured when the worshiper, under the influence of wine, experienced elation and divine infilling. Realistic participation in the life of the deity seems to have been attained by drinking the blood and eating the flesh of an animal (at first probably a human being) in which the god was supposed to be incarnated. The fact that the victim was devoured in great haste in order to prevent the escape of the divinity gave the ceremony a frenzied character.

c) Another very popular mystery religion was the Phrygian cult of Cybele-Attis. Cybele, a mother-goddess, like Demeter, was the source of life, and Attis was the god who, representing nature, died in winter and was restored to life in summer.

d) In the Mithra mysteries from Persia, Mithra was represented as being born out of a rock and becoming like the Greek Prometheus, the champion of man against the powers of darkness. He was identified with the sun, and so the cult aimed to include all other religions.

e) In the cult of Isis and Osiris (or Serapis) from Egypt, Osiris was a beneficent Egyptian king who suffered a violent death in his struggle against the forces of evil, represented by Typhon, and Isis was his wife, who after cruel sufferings and wanderings, the remembrance of which made her afterward sympathetic with human

suffering, found the body and had it embalmed. Osiris was deified and became the ruler of the nether world and so the arbiter of man's destiny.

The mystery religions had their origin in the worship of nature. Resurrection and immortality were suggested by the eternal mystery of life and death and coming to life again as seen in day and night, the seasons, and the decay and revivification of vegetation. At first crude and sometimes grossly immoral, they became refined and purified by the growing moral sense of men, and the worshiper had to purify himself in order to enjoy communion with the god. This was done by penance and ablution, a kind of spiritual disinfection.

These religions appealed to the emotions and inspired hope of immortality. The rites were interesting and enthraling and raised the worshiper into a higher emotional state in which he felt himself united with the divine. As the deity suffered and died and rose again to life and power, so he could sympathize with suffering and give comfort in affliction and hope in death of a blessed immortality. Thus the mystery religions while not affecting Christianity directly, because the Christians feared and hated them as pagan, nevertheless prepared the people for the reception of Christianity, which seemed so like them in many respects and yet was infinitely superior in its absolute purity, sanity, and historical attestation, and especially in meeting the final problem not of saving men from sorrow and death only but of saving them from sin by the development of that character which makes them sons of God.

SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS

1. Angus, *Environment of Early Christianity*, pp. 30–139, 164–226.
2. Case, *The Evolution of Early Christianity*, pp. 48–77, 195–238, 284–330.
3. Breasted, *Ancient Times*, pp. 425–83, 549–665.
4. Robinson, *Life of Paul*, pp. 5–24.
5. Kent, *The Work and Teachings of the Apostles*, pp. 9–20.
6. McGiffert, *The Apostolic Age*, pp. 151–57.
7. Gilbert, *Jesus*, pp. 87–114.
8. Bartlet, *The Apostolic Age*, pp. xxiv–xxx.
9. Dill, *Roman Society*, pp. 289–383.
10. Kennedy, *St. Paul and the Mystery Religions*, pp. 68–114.
11. Milligan, *Greek Papyri*, Nos. 11, 12, 16, 17, 36, 37, 38, 42, 52

CHAPTER II

THE LOCAL FIELD

THE JEWISH WORLD

1. Palestine and Its People
   Gen. 11:31; 12:1–9; 15:18–21; Exod. 3:8; Deut. 8:7–9; I Kings 4:21; Luke 3:1; Acts 10:39; Heb. 11:9
2. Political Conditions
   Num. 11:16, 17; Mark 3:6; 6:16–28; 8:31; 12:13; 15:1; Matt. 2:1, 16, 19, 22; Luke 2:1; 3:1, 2; 13:31, 32; 20:22; 23:6–12, 15; Acts 4:1–21, 27; 5:17, 18; 11:28; Phil. 4:22
3. Judaism
   Deut. 28; Mic. 6:6–8; Mark 7:1–15; Matt. 3:7–9; 23; Acts 4:1–3; Rom. 4:11–13; 9:1–5, 30–33; 10:1–3; 11:1–5; Gal. 3:7, 8, 16, 29
4. The Messianic Hope
   Gen. 49:10; Isa. 9:6; Jer. 23:5; Dan. 2:34, 35, 44, 45; 7:13, 14; 9:25; Mic. 5:2; Zech. 9:9; Mark 14:61, 62; Matt. 2:1–7; 21:5; 25:31; 26:64; 27:11; Luke 1:32; 2:11; 3:15, 17; John 12:13
5. The Dispersion
   Jer. 24:9; John 7:35; Acts 2:5–11; 11:19, 20; 13:5, 14, 15; 18:12–17; 19:8, 9, 33
6. "The Fulness of Time"
   Luke 3:15; Gal. 4:4

1. PALESTINE AND ITS PEOPLE

Although Christianity became a part of the complex life of the Graeco-Roman world, it had its origin in the little strip of land on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean known as Palestine, whose inhabitants were called Jews. Its founder was a Jew and the early leaders of the movement, Peter, James, John, and especially Paul, were Jews. In this country and its people, therefore, we are particularly interested when studying the background

of Christianity. It was a small country not more than 160 miles from north to south and 70 from east to west, bounded on the north and northeast by Phoenicia and Syria, on the south and southeast by Arabia, and on the west by the Mediterranean Sea.

The surface of Palestine is very highly diversified. In the north rises a high range of mountains called Lebanon from which two parallel chains run south into Galilee in the center of the country and unite into a ridge of hills which continues south through Samaria and Judea. From the west of these hills there is a gradual slope to the Mediterranean, and from the east a rapid descent to the Jordan River and the Dead Sea. On the east side of the Jordan there is a similar range of hills running from north to south. Between the hills are rich valleys and plains. Every variety of landscape is thus presented and in consequence there are many varieties of vegetation and opportunities for all kinds of occupations. The most abundant crops were grapes and figs, and the two chief occupations besides agriculture were fishing and sheep-raising because of the many streams and lakes and the rich pasture on the innumerable hillsides. It was in truth

> A land flowing with milk and honey . . . . a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs flowing forth in valleys and hills; a land of wheat and barley and vines and fig-trees and pomegranates; a land of olive-trees and honey; a land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack anything in it; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig copper.

In its geographical position Palestine was practically the center of the ancient civilized world. While enjoying, because of its natural boundaries, the Lebanon

Mountains, the Syrian and Arabian deserts, and the Mediterranean, such isolation as to give it a high degree of national individuality, it was surrounded by the greatest people of antiquity, the Assyrians and Babylonians to the east, and the Phoenicians and Egyptians on the north and south. The commercial and military competition of these nations made Palestine an international theater of action. Later, when the world-empire of Alexander was divided among his generals, the two greatest rivals, Egypt and Syria, continually crossed and recrossed this little country in mutual invasion and retreat. It might in consequence well be called the Belgium of the ancient world.

The people claimed descent from the twelve sons of Jacob whose descendants were organized into twelve tribes, but only the tribes of Judah and Benjamin returned from the Babylonian Captivity, and their descendants were called Jews from the larger tribe. During their captivity they lost the ancient Hebrew language and learned the cognate Semitic tongue of their captors. This written in Hebrew letters and called Aramaic was the common language in the time of the beginning of Christianity, although, as was the case in other parts of the empire, the people were largely bilingual and the language of commerce was Greek. Hebrew became a classical language used only by the learned and in religious ceremony. It had to be translated in order to be understood by the common people.

2. POLITICAL CONDITIONS

In order to understand political conditions in Palestine at this time, it is necessary to glance briefly at the history

of the country from the beginning of the Hellenistic period or the time of Alexander the Great (336–323 B.C.). Palestine had been included in Alexander's conquests and at his death when his empire was divided into four parts under the rule of his generals (the Diadochi), this little country was left between the upper and nether millstones of Syria and Egypt. It was traversed by armies of each as they marched to attack the other, and subject to the tyranny of each in turn, according to the fickle fortune of war, until in 198 B.C. it became permanently a dependency of Syria under Antiochus the Great.

The local government still remained a kind of theocracy in which there was no distinction between civil and religious law or, as we might say, church and state. The chief ruler was the high priest, who was assisted by a kind of senate called the Sanhedrin, consisting of about seventy priests and elders or heads of families, which traced its origin back to the time of Moses, who appointed seventy elders of the people to assist him. This high council, consisting, at the beginning of the Christian Era, of seventy-one pure Hebrews—chief priests, scribes, and elders—met in Jerusalem in a sort of senate, cabinet, and supreme court combined. There were also similar bodies in the smaller towns consisting of seven and in larger towns of twenty-three members.

This combination of religion and government led to serious consequences in the history of the little nation. The Syrian rulers noticed that the religious element of the population called the Chasidim or "the pious" were also the patriots who were most devoted to their country and opposed to foreign domination, and that the rich and prosperous who had given up the strict worship of

their fathers and adopted Hellenistic customs were contented with Syrian rule. Antiochus Epiphanes (175–164 B.C.) while engaged in war with Egypt came to the conclusion that the pious were not loyal to him but were friendly to Egypt. He saw that those who had given up their religion were loyal to Syria, so he decided that the way to make them all loyal was to compel them all to give up the Law of Moses. He sent his soldiers to enforce this design. The pious resisted and took refuge in the mountains. The Temple was desecrated and a hog sacrificed to Zeus on the altar of burnt offering.

It was not, however, an easy task to crush out the Jewish religion, and many resisted to the death. When the Syrian officer came to a little town called Modein to compel the people to sacrifice to heathen gods, an old priest called Mattathias killed him, fled to the mountains with his sons, and raised the standard of revolt. The pious flocked to his standard, and he carried on war against the Syrians vigorously and successfully. He died in a few months, but his son Judas (165–161 B.C.) took his place, defeated the Syrians, recovered Jerusalem, and reconsecrated the Temple. Judas was surnamed Maccabaeus and his descendants were called Maccabeans.

The pious now felt that with the restoration of their religion by the reconsecration of the Temple their object was accomplished, and, being naturally pacifists, they laid down their arms and deserted Judas. Then the Syrians came back at him and before he could rally a sufficient force he was killed. However, the war was carried on by his brothers Jonathan (161–143 B.C.) and Simon (143–135 B.C.) until the Syrian yoke was completely shaken off and Judea became independent (141 B.C.).

The people in gratitude voted the high priesthood to the Maccabean family permanently. It naturally followed as time went on that they became autocratic and assumed the title of king (109 B.C.). Soon, too, they began to form foreign alliances after the custom of other monarchs and so offended the pious, who now came to be called Pharisees, a name meaning "Separatists," because they held aloof from everything defiling or non-Jewish, and so from foreign alliances. The kings changed their favor to the Sadducees, the aristocratic Hellenistic party, and civil war ensued which lasted over half a century until two brothers, one a Pharisee and the other a Sadducee, became rival claimants of the throne, and each appealed to Rome for aid.

As was her custom, Rome came in and settled the matter in favor of one claimant (Hyrcanus II), but made the little country a part of her Empire. The title of king was taken away and the ruler called only "high priest." Jerusalem was captured by Pompey in 63 B.C. Hyrcanus proved a weak ruler and the real power fell into the hands of a strong politician called Antipater, a native of Idumea in the south of Judea and so not a real Jew but an Edomite or descendant of Esau. When Hyrcanus was carried away into captivity by the Parthians, who had been invited in by his rival to help him secure the throne, Antipater's son Herod, by winning the Roman government to his side, had himself appointed king of Judea but of course subject to Rome.

This Herod, called the Great, reigned from 37 to 4 B.C. and proved a strong but unscrupulous ruler. To please the people and to make his position more secure, he married a Maccabean princess called Mariamne, and

rebuilt the Temple with great magnificence. He maintained peace and order and was on the whole a good ruler for that time, but he was thoroughly hated by the people who were kept in submission only by fear. He put to death all whom he thought dangerous as rivals for the royal power, including even his uncle and three sons and his own wife and her mother and brother. At his death his kingdom, according to his will with the sanction of Rome, was divided among his three sons, Archelaus, Herod Antipas, and Herod Philip.

To Archelaus was given Judea, Samaria, and Idumea, with the title of ethnarch, which he held until 6 A.D., when he was deposed and Judea made a Roman province under procurators. Of these the best known was the stubborn, revengeful, corrupt, and cruel Pontius Pilate (26–36 A.D.), who was the governor during Jesus' public life. Herod Antipas was made tetrarch of Galilee and Perea (4 B.C.–39 A.D.). Jesus belonged to his province. Jesus' characterization of him as "that fox" was peculiarly appropriate. He was crafty, ambitious, and fond of display. This was the Herod who beheaded John the Baptist because he rebuked him for taking his brother Philip's wife. Herod Philip ruled, also with the title of tetrarch, a small territory east of Galilee from 4 to 34 A.D. He was a mild and peaceful ruler and well liked by the people. These were the political divisions of Palestine at the time of the beginning of Christianity.

3. JUDAISM

As the founder of Christianity was born and brought up as a Jew in the midst of Judaism, the religion of the Jews becomes of paramount interest in our study. The

God of the Jews became the God of the Christians and, in fact, at first the Christians regarded themselves as loyal Jews and their religion as reformed Judaism. The great contribution of the Jews to religion was that of a pure monotheism. It is true that the idea of one God was developed in Greek philosophy, but in Judaism it took a more distinct and unequivocal form, and the one God became in the thought of the Jewish prophets a god of absolute righteousness who required justice, kindness, and humility from his people.

The distinctive feature of Judaism was the belief that, while the God of the Jews was the Creator and Lord of all the world, he had chosen the descendants of Abraham out from all the nations to be a "peculiar people," the object of his greatest solicitude and favor. The prophets indeed acknowledged that God would bless all men, but held that this blessing would come through the Jews. The promise was made to Abraham that he and his descendants should become possessed of all the nations. The Jews believed that only Abraham's children would receive this divine blessing, or "salvation," as it came to be called, but that all nations might become Abraham's children by adoption and so become eligible to this blessing.

This belief gave the Jews a very high conception of their national destiny. When in their position as the Belgium of the ancient world they were trampled upon now by one tyrant and now by another, their prophets encouraged them with the idea that God could not break his promise. He would soon come and deliver them with a "high hand and uplifted arm," as he had done before in their glorious history, especially in the classic case of

their birth as a nation in being delivered from the bondage in Egypt. This was the origin of the famous messianic hope, the hope that God, some day in the future, more or less distant, either in person as their king or through a king (messiah) who should be his chosen representative, would deliver them from all enemies and establish a perpetual reign of righteousness—the Kingdom of God.

Concurrent with this belief there naturally arose the question why God had forsaken his people and delivered them over to cruel enemies. In the answer to this question lies the great ethical basis of the Jewish religion, in fact, the fundamental conception that distinguished Judaism from all other ancient religions. This answer was that God's promise was a covenant in which he had agreed to bless them and be their God only on condition that they would do right and serve him as faithful children. If they turned away from him and sinned he would punish them with national disaster. The prophets denounced the sins of the people but continually held out the promise of blessed deliverance if they would repent and serve God.

When the Jews returned from their captivity they had so thoroughly learned their lesson that never again did they turn to idolatry. But in a sense they had learned it too well. They came to believe that righteousness consisted in scrupulous performance of the multitudinous details of ceremonial rites. These rites had their origin in the conception of God as a transcendent holy being, far removed from the corrupt gods of the other nations, and were designed to raise the people to a position of physical and moral purity where they could

be acceptable to such a holy being. Such emphasis came to be laid on the mere ceremonies that the moral side was often forgotten, and formalism and mere legalism took the place of the religion of the heart. This post-exilic legalistic religion might be called the religion of the priests as distinguished from the earlier more spiritual religion of the prophets.

After the Maccabean revolution the Pharisees became the religious leaders of the people. They were extreme "purists" and believed that the absolute purity demanded of the people by God could only be secured by the minute observance, not only of every "jot and tittle" of the Levitical code or Law of Moses as it was called, but also of all the precepts of the oral traditions which had accumulated around it. This scrupulous observance led to a change in the conception of the Abrahamic covenant. It came to be looked upon as a commercial contract where God was bound to pay out rewards in proportion to the performance of his supposed legal exactions.

4. THE MESSIANIC HOPE

The messianic hope, too, now began to take on more of an individual character. From the time of the Maccabean wars many apocalyptic writings arose, picturing the coming blessed age of the overthrow of the nation's enemies and an era of righteousness and glory. Formerly the nation only was concerned in the messianic blessedness, but now the individual pious Jew began to think of his own personal reward, and because of the impossibility of enjoying that reward in the present state of national misfortune, there arose the desire and hope of sharing in the future glory of the nation and a blessed

resurrection of the pious in which they would enjoy the messianic age when it should come. With this hope developed the idea of a judgment in which the wicked should be separated from the righteous in order to determine who was to participate in the blessedness of the messianic age and who should be cast out into Gehenna, the pit of abomination.

The conception of a Messiah apart from God himself was not at first a part of the hope. It was the idea of a blessed, prosperous Kingdom with perhaps a human descendant of David on the throne, and God's Kingdom in the sense that God's authority would be recognized.

When the realization of this hope was long delayed, and disaster came again and again as in the terrible persecution under Antiochus Epiphanes and a century later the galling subjugation to Rome, there were many who began to lose faith in natural means of succor and to look for a new age of righteousness, directly controlled by divine power, when all the nations should be ruled by a Messiah who should be the representative of God appearing suddenly, destroying the wicked and setting up his Kingdom with spectacular and miraculous demonstration. This was the idea of the Kingdom put forth by the apocalyptic writers of the Maccabean and Roman periods. It is found especially in the *Sibylline Oracles*, the *Psalms of Solomon*, the *Book of Enoch*, Josephus, and the gospels. The earlier nationalistic idea, however, still prevailed, and with some accretions from the apocalyptic was the popular conception in the time of Jesus.

Just before the Christian Era there was a general belief that the blessed Kingdom was about to be established. The pious were so punctilious in their observance

of the law that many thought God could not demand more and must now fulfil his promise. In the *Assumption of Moses*, written within a few years of the birth of Jesus, many signs of the approaching Kingdom are enumerated, and Josephus tells of many false messiahs who appeared and attracted large numbers of followers. "The people were in expectation."

5. THE DISPERSION

The Jews were not limited to Palestine, at the time of which we write, any more than at present. In fact, there were more Jews outside than inside of Palestine. These Jews in other lands were called by the Greek term, "Diaspora," and are generally referred to now by the English equivalent, "Dispersion." Large numbers had been carried off into captivity in the early days, and later many had gone voluntarily into other countries, as is always the case with the population of a very small country.

Great numbers of Jews settled in Egypt when Palestine was subject to that country in the third century B.C. and formed a large Jewish colony in Alexandria. Philo claims that there were a million Jews in Egypt in his time. In the next century when the dominion passed to Syria, a large number of Jews settled in Antioch and other cities of that country, and after 63 B.C. when Palestine became a part of the Roman Empire, the Jews found their way to all parts of the Empire in their capacity as traders and money-lenders. The earlier Sybilline writings of the second century B.C. claimed that "every land and sea was full of Jews." Strabo said it was hard to find a place on earth where there were no Jews, and

Philo and Josephus say that Jerusalem might be called the world's capital.

The Jews thus scattered over the Empire often became citizens of the cities in which they settled, and many of them secured for themselves by purchase or otherwise the rights of Roman citizenship. The attitude of the Roman government toward them was generally friendly, and they were in that day, as now, the most prosperous people everywhere. The popular attitude toward them, however, seems to have been that of jealousy, hatred, and contempt because of their financial prosperity, exclusiveness, and open scorn of other religions.

By their contact with other people, however, the Jews of the Dispersion lost much of the narrowness and national prejudice of the Jews of Palestine. They adopted the Greek language, and, in fact, it became their only language. Their sacred books were of necessity translated into Greek, and the Greek version or Septuagint as it was called became their Bible and only means of access to the Mosaic Law. While they remained true to the religion and traditions of their ancestry, they adopted Greek customs to a large extent and were affected by Hellenistic culture. They were called "Hellenists" from the Greek verb, "Hellenize"—to make Hellenic or Greek.

While the Temple at Jerusalem, with its 24,000 priests and multitude of attendant Levites, remained the center of the national religious life of all Jews, and every pious Jew, no matter in what part of the Empire he lived, hoped to attend at least one Passover in his lifetime, another more democratic institution became the real source of the religious life of the people everywhere and especially

in the Dispersion. The synagogue, or meeting-house, originated by necessity during the Babylonian Exile, and after their return from captivity it continued and became a permanent institution.

Wherever there were ten Jews in a community, usually a synagogue was to be found. The conduct of worship in the synagogue in direct contrast to that of the Temple was exceedingly simple and democratic. It consisted of psalms, prayers, and the reading of the Law and the Prophets with sometimes a brief extempore address by a visiting rabbi or some visitor of note who happened to be present. There was no altar, no image, no ritual. The only furniture was a reading desk, a box for the sacred books, and a burning candlestick.

These democratic houses of worship scattered all over the Empire had a great influence in the religious life of the Greeks, many of whom were attracted by the pure monotheism and ethical soundness of Judaism. Those who submitted to circumcision and adopted all the Jewish ceremonial observances were called proselytes. Many, however, accepted the monotheism and moral teachings but stopped short of the ceremonial rites, especially circumcision. It is these latter who are called "devout persons" and "God-fearing" Greeks in the New Testament. The Jews were essentially a missionary people. Their missionary zeal is well characterized in Jesus' saying that they "compassed sea and land to make one proselyte." This was because of their belief that they had the only true religion, and that all men must be sons of Abraham, either by birth or by adoption, in order to be "saved" or eligible to receive the blessings of the coming messianic Kingdom.

6. "THE FULNESS OF TIME"

"When the fulness of time was come God sent forth his Son." How aptly these words of Paul describe conditions at the beginning of the Christian Era may be seen from the foregoing study of the world out of which Christianity arose. It may be desirable to conclude with a brief summary of the conditions that prepared the way for the spread of Christianity.

1. The fact that the whole civilized world was a political unit under a sovereign who brought about a state of peace and order hitherto unknown was a great factor in paving the way for Christianity. Christianity was destined to become a religion for all nations, and the Roman rule broke down the old barriers that divided decisively one race from another. The unity of the nations under one strong ruler who was regarded as a savior and worshiped as a god prepared the minds of men for the great conception of universal brotherhood under one God, the Father of all mankind.

2. The excellent means of intercourse between all parts of the Empire brought about by the peace and order established by Roman prowess and by the great Roman roads which made travel easy by land, and the destruction of piracy which opened up as never before the highways of the great sea, made it possible for the pioneer preachers of Christianity to carry their message to all men. Perhaps the most important unifying factor of all was the general spread of the Hellenistic language which, as never before or since, made it possible for these pioneer preachers to speak their message at first hand in all parts of the world.

3. A third great factor which prepared the world for Christianity might be called "the death of the gods"—the decay of the old national polytheistic religions together with the breakdown of morality and the growth of individualism and the consequent heart-cry of the individual for freedom from sin and sorrow and death. It was this longing which the new mystery religions sought to satisfy, and in so doing prepared men's minds for a universal religion of redemption from sin and death in which God was to be Father of all men and all men brothers.

4. Perhaps the greatest of all these factors was the Jewish Diaspora or Dispersion which carried all over the world the ideals of pure monotheism and ethical living. Attached to every Jewish synagogue were proselytes from the native peoples, and these provided the bridge between Christianity and paganism and became the earliest gentile converts and most enthusiastic and effective preachers of the new faith. From these also there spread among all nations the influence of the messianic hope which at this time had developed into an earnest world-wide expectation of the dawn of a new era, a kind of golden age when the God of all men would send to them a deliverer from sin and death who would establish a perpetual and universal reign of righteousness and peace.

SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS

1. McGiffert, *A History of Christianity in the Apostolic Age*, pp. 1–9; 157–60.
2. Burton and Mathews, *Life of Christ*, pp. 9–15.
3. Angus, *The Environment of Early Christianity*, pp. 140–63, 222–26.

4. Case, *Evolution of Early Christianity*, pp. 78–122.
5. Stevens, *The Teaching of Jesus*, pp. 1–18.
6. Burton, *A Source Book for the Teaching of Jesus*, pp. 18–44.
7. Fairweather, *Background of the Gospels*, pp. 13–41, 57–63, 137–53, 180–215.
8. Barton, *Jesus of Nazareth*, pp. 36–53.
9. Bartlet, *Apostolic Age*, pp. xxxi–xlvii.

CHAPTER III

THE BEGINNING

JOHN AND THE ADVENT OF JESUS

1. John the Baptist
   Mark 1:1–8; Matt. 3:1–12; Luke 3:1–20; cf. John 1:19–20
2. Jesus' Early Life
   Mark 1:9; 3:31–35; 6:3, 4; Matt. 4:12, 13; 7:11, 24–30; 12:46; 13:33, 55, 56; Luke 4:16; 8:19–30; 11:7; 15:8; cf. Matt. 2; Luke 2; Exod. 23:14–17; 35:22, 25; Lev. 12:8; Deut. 6:4–8; 16:16
3. His Call and Temptation
   Mark 1:9–13; Matt. 3:13—4:11; Luke 3:21—4:13; Ps. 2:7; Isa. 42:1
4. His Relationship to John
   Mark 1:14–30; 6:14–39; Matt. 3:13–17; 14:1–12; Luke 7:18–35; John 4:1–3; cf. John 1:29–37
5. His Public Ministry
   Mark 1:16–39; cf. Matt. 4:18–25; 8:14–17; Luke 4:31–44; 5:1–11; 11:29, 30

1. JOHN THE BAPTIST

Our earliest sources all agree in starting the story of the "Beginning of the Good News" with a brief account of the career of John the Baptist. He appears just at the time of universal expectation of the realization of the messianic hope, as indicated at the close of the last chapter. Luke, who claims that he investigated all the facts connected with the origin of Christianity "carefully from the very beginning," says that John began to deliver his message in the fifteenth year of Tiberius. We know almost nothing of his early life.

From Luke's narrative we gather that he was born in the hill country of Judea of a devout, priestly family. He made his public appearance suddenly in the wilderness of Judea, clad in rough, primitive raiment, with the startling announcement that the Kingdom of God was coming immediately He at once attracted attention and people came out to hear him "from Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond Jordan."

John was a very striking figure—austere, ascetic, clad in rough raiment, with a stern message very similar to that of the Old Testament prophets, particularly Amos. The chief difference was that the new era was "at hand." The time to which all the old prophets had pointed had come. The principal emphasis of John's message was on judgment. It was a clarion call to repentance because God was coming to judge the people.

The Jews welcomed the announcement of the coming of the time of judgment, thinking that God was coming to judge the other nations and deliver his ancient people. For them the "rule of God" meant the rule of the Jews as the conquerors of all other nations. But John soon undeceived them. His message of repentance was for them. God was coming to judge the Jews. "Produce the fruits that answer to your repentance," he said to them, "instead of beginning to say to yourselves, 'We have a father in Abraham.' I tell you God can raise children to Abraham from these stones." The axe was "already lying at the root of the trees." Those not bearing good fruit would be "cut down and cast into the fire."

John also announced the immediate coming of "one mightier" than himself, a great judge who would separate

the bad from the good as chaff from wheat and "gather the wheat into his granary and burn the chaff with unquenchable fire." John made no claim for himself. When asked by delegates from Jerusalem whether he was the Messiah or Elijah he denied being either. He evidently thought of himself as merely a preacher of righteousness, "a voice" calling men to repent. He believed that the wonderful new era which had been foretold by the prophets was just about to begin, and he felt impelled to do what he could to warn his people to get ready, to warn them that mere observance of the forms of their religion would not prepare them to stand before the "Mightier One" nor save them from condemnation.

Although the burden of John's message was the immediate coming of the age of righteousness, his message was not political but ethical. He called for a moral reformation, a religion of heart and life, the exercise of justice, mercy, honesty, and truth. He gave no intimation of the character of the new era. He merely proclaimed its coming and the consequent need of preparation. That he did not give attention to political affairs nor concern himself about the national aspect of the coming age is evident from such utterances as that addressed to the soldiers when they asked what they should do: "Never extort money, never lay a false charge, but be content with your wages."

The most spectacular thing about John's public ministry was his use of baptism from which he has always been distinguished as "the Baptist" or "the Baptizer." He used the rite as a striking symbol of moral purification because it would be readily so understood by the

people. It was in common use in the Levitical law to signify ceremonial cleansing from various kinds of physical contamination, and it had become a distinctive feature of the ceremony of making proselytes from heathenism. As John used it of course it would, in the eyes of the people, naturally partake of the symbolism of both of those kinds of ceremonies but more particularly of the latter.

The striking thing about John's use of baptism would be that he was baptizing Jews instead of heathen. This would at once indicate that the Jews needed to be cleansed from moral filth before becoming fit for the new era which John was heralding. The rite then as used by John had a threefold signification: a public confession of guilt, the giving up of the old sinful life, and a consecration to a new, purer life. John's words that the people should bring forth fruits that answer to repentance instead of relying on their Abrahamic descent and the consequent Mosaic ceremonialism show that he did not regard this rite as of value in itself but used it as a convenient symbol for the confession of sin and consecration to a purer life.

The feature of John's message that attracted the people and advertised him all over Palestine was undoubtedly his insistence on the immediate coming of the age of righteousness. This together with his spectacular appearance and bold and fearless denunciation of sin and the dramatic ceremony of baptism applied to Jewish converts rather than to Gentiles brought crowds to him from all directions. The impression he made is seen from the testimony of Josephus, the famous contemporary historian:

He was a good man and commanded the Jews to exercise virtue, both as justice toward one another and piety toward God, and so to come to baptism; for baptism would be acceptable to God, if they made use of it, not in order to expiate some sin, but for the purity of the body provided that the soul was thoroughly purified beforehand by righteousness.

He aroused the messianic expectation of many people to a high pitch of enthusiasm, and made it much easier for the "Mightier One" who came after him to secure their attention.

2. JESUS' EARLY LIFE

Our earliest sources (Mark and the Logia of Matthew) introduced Jesus as one of those who came to hear John preach in the Judean wilderness, saying that he "came from Nazareth of Galilee." This marks the "Beginning of the Good News about Jesus." As in the case of John and in fact of most great historical characters, very little is known of the founder of Christianity before his entrance into public life. There is, of course, a great amount of legendary material in non-canonical gospel stories, but it is practically worthless because of its extremely fanciful not to say fantastic character, and its obviously late date. The few glimpses we get into his early life come from incidental references in the accounts in our sources of his public ministry.

The fact that Jesus was brought up in Galilee rather than in Judea undoubtedly had an influence on his life and message. In Galilee there was comparative freedom from the narrow, legalizing, and deadening influence of the rabbinical schools of the Pharisees. There was not so much slavery to the letter and much more openness and humanness. The only indication of rabbinical influence

in Jesus' teachings seems to be that of a strong reaction against it. Instead of being cumbrous, redundant, and veiled, his teaching is simple, direct, and clear.

Incidental references in our sources give us a few interesting glimpses into Jesus' family and home life. That there were five sons, Jesus, James, Joseph, Simon, and Judah, and at least two daughters whose names are not mentioned, is seen from the objection of the people of "his native place" which, as the context indicates, was in Galilee and which is referred to also as "Nazareth where he was brought up": "Is this not the carpenter the son of Mary, and the brother of James and Joseph and Judah and Simon? Are not his sisters settled here among us?" The fact that his mother is referred to several times in the gospel records of his adult life and that no mention is made of his father indicates that his father died early, and there is a strong tradition to this effect.

The reference to Jesus as the carpenter's son in a manner that would indicate that on that account he could not be expected to have "wisdom," and Luke's statement that his mother, after his birth, made the offering according to the Levitical law of those "whose means do not suffice for a lamb," may be confirmatory of the tradition that his parents were in comparatively humble circumstances.

The songs of Mary and Zechariah and the words of Elizabeth and Simeon, which may have been gathered by Luke among the Palestinian hills when he was "investigating all things carefully from the very beginning," show the atmosphere in which Jesus and his neighbors lived, one of simple piety and confident expectation of the messianic deliverance. In Jesus'

sayings are found many intimations of a pleasant home life. These indicate that his father was, as the compiler of one of the gospel narratives suggests, a kind-hearted man in whom justice was tempered with mercy, one who knew how to "give his children what is good."

Jesus takes many illustrations from home life, such as the housewife raising bread from leaven, sweeping the corners of an ill-lighted room in search of a lost coin, the father in bed at night with the children all around him in the common room reluctant to get up and open the door for a neighbor who wants to borrow a loaf of bread. The early death of his father, leaving his trade and the support of the family to him as the oldest son, would make the home life and the mother even more distinct in his memory.

While we have no specific information as to the education of Jesus, it was no doubt the same as that of all other Jewish boys at the time. The Jews educated all their children, not a select few. As soon as he could speak he would be taught the "Shema," the national creed or confession of faith of which the opening words were: "Hear O Israel, Jehovah our God is one Jehovah: and thou shalt love Jehovah thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy might." As soon as possible he learned his letters by writing these same words. This instruction was given by his mother and later she explained the meaning of the quotation and told him of Israel's heroes and history. Josephus tells us that the Jewish children could recite the law more easily than tell their own names.

At the age of six he would be sent to the "vineyard" or school attached to the local synagogue. Attendance

at these schools was made compulsory about the year 75 B.C. Here he would learn to read the history and law of his people from the sacred books in Hebrew which at the time had become a classic language. At home he spoke Aramaic. That he knew Greek also is indicated by the fact that he spoke to the Gentiles apparently without an interpreter, as in the case of the Syro-Phoenician woman. He no doubt had access to the sacred books in the synagogue, for his discourses show that he was thoroughly familiar with their contents. In the account given of his visit to Nazareth it is stated that it was "his custom" to attend the synagogue worship on the Sabbath.

That the world of nature entered into his education is seen from his discourses where he speaks of birds, flowers, flocks, herds, clouds and storms, sunrise and sunset, and the work of countrymen in farm and vineyard. His native village of Nazareth may not have been so small and quiet as is generally supposed. It is now a town of about ten thousand, and while it may not have been quite as large in Jesus' day, it was a place of some importance in Galilee. It was located near the great highway between Syria and Egypt, to and fro upon which for several centuries had marched, alternately advancing and retreating, the armies of these ancient rivals. The village was situated in a basin on hills which rose around it 1,500 feet above the sea.

No doubt from these hills he often looked down in imagination upon "the kingdoms of the earth and the glory of them," for, as we learn from some of his parables, he undoubtedly took an interest in contemporary as well as ancient history. The waters of the Sea of

Galilee were only 15 miles to the east, and about 20 miles to the northwest lay the great sea, the Mediterranean, the center of the civilized world. Within full view stretched the great plain of Esdraelon, famous for many celebrated battles of his nation. In populous Galilee he would hear Greek spoken, especially by the many traders; from the hills he would see the Roman legions march by, and no doubt his active, questioning mind took advantage of intercourse with many travelers to learn much of the history of his own day. At any rate, he acquired a world-outlook and cosmopolitan sympathy entirely foreign to the average inhabitant of Judea.

Another not inconsiderable element that entered into his education was the frequent visits made to Jerusalem. Luke tells us that "his parents used to go every year to Jerusalem at the Passover festival" and has preserved an interesting account of one of these visits made when Jesus was twelve years old. At that age he had just finished his course in the synagogue school and had become "a son of the law," subject to all its requirements. It was probably his first visit and the influence on his inquiring young mind must have been very great, arousing all the patriotic instincts which his careful study of the history of his people had developed.

The great Passover festival, lasting for seven days, gave large opportunity to the visitors for contact with the religio-political leaders and teachers, and Luke's story indicates that the young Jesus made good use of it to ask questions about the many things over which he had been studying and thinking even at this tender age. He became so interested that he forgot about the time of

departure and was left behind when the Nazareth caravan departed for home. His parents' confidence in him is indicated by the fact that they evidently felt that he could take care of himself and did not notice for a considerable time that he was not in the company. When they returned they found him in the Temple courts eagerly questioning the teachers.

His mother's natural complaint that they had been anxiously searching for him he answered also naturally with another question, as was characteristic of him in later days. The object of these visits to Jerusalem was to learn about God and his will. It seemed obvious to the boy, so absorbed in what to him at least was the real object of his visit, that they would know just where to find him. "Why did you look for me, did you not know I must be here?" He could not think how they would expect to find him anywhere else.

This incident indicates that Jesus had already conceived the idea that dominated his life, that God was the Father of the individual as well as of the nation, as had been taught by the prophets. There is nothing abnormal here, but only the natural development of a bright, thoughtful boy who was enthusiastic over the opportunity so long desired of learning more about the great God and Father of his nation whom he had come to love and regard as his own Father.

Still another element of his training for his life-work was his trade of carpenter. The word used for carpenter in the sources suggests an originator or constructor. There are indications in his sayings that he was not a mere hired hand but a master-builder, to some extent, at least, an employer and director of others. Thus was

developed leadership and the skill in managing men which became evident when he entered upon his public ministry.

3. HIS CALL AND TEMPTATION

As has been indicated, Jesus is introduced to us in the Gospels as one of those who came into the Judean wilderness to hear John. John's fame had spread through Palestine and of course had come to the quick ears of the carpenter of Nazareth. John's stirring call to a better life and his announcement of the immediate approach of the new era appealed strongly to one who had been thinking earnestly for years on his nation's destiny and the interests of his "Father." It was natural, therefore, that he should be among those who came to hear John preach.

He was thrilled by John's stirring words of the immediate approach of the age of righteousness, and, as in the baptismal rite, he publicly accepted his message and committed himself to its furtherance, thinking no doubt of the necessity of leadership and of the qualifications for such a task, there came to him with vivid force the words of the God he had so long recognized as Father, in a combination of two well-known messianic passages: "Thou art my son, the beloved, in thee is my delight." Jesus had just accepted John's declaration of the immediate approach of the new era, and so these words meant for him: "The time has come and *you* are my son, *you* are the man who is to deliver your people." Thus came to him probably for the first time the consciousness of a unique relationship to God in which he was called to a great task and endowed with the power necessary for its accomplishment.

With the new sense of God's presence and his great responsibility he felt at once compelled to seek solitude. He must be alone with his God and Father to think out his plan of action. "The spirit *drove* him immediately into the desert." Thus had come the call to his life-work and with it came, as to many others since his time, the temptation to seek an easier path.

The pangs of hunger while meditating on the mighty task before him suggested the first phase of the temptation. By this time grosser temptations had been conquered. To some extent he now realized his extraordinary capacities, and with this realization came the tempter's voice: "If you are the son of God you must have wonderful power. Why not use it to feed yourself?" His answer quoted from the Old Testament: "Man is not to live on bread alone but on every word that issues from the mouth of God," shows that it was the temptation that comes sometime to most men, to use their powers and capabilities to secure for themselves a life of ease and indulgence. It was the temptation to use his new power for his own personal interest. In this suggestion he recognized Satan's voice. God never accomplished a mission through one who thought of himself.

Then came the question, "How shall I announce myself? How shall I convince the people that my message is from God? It is written of him who is the object of God's special care that God's angels will hold him up and not suffer him to fall." Why not give the people that for which he knew they clamored—"a sign," a spectacular, miraculous demonstration? Why not cast himself down from the "pinnacle of the Temple"

before the multitude, trusting in God's promise that he would be miraculously suspended in the air and suffer no injury? They would all at once acknowledge his divine leadership and follow him. In this he recognized another evil suggestion—testing God, not trusting him. In after-days, when pressed for such spectacular demonstration, he said: "The Kingdom of God is not coming in a spectacular visible manner; people will not say, 'Look!' 'Here it is!' or 'There it is!'"

The next question that came to him was with regard to the method of accomplishment of his mission. Why not fall in with the popular idea, make common cause with the present leaders, and so enlist at once thousands who were ready to follow a military leader, conquer the nations, and then teach them his ideals in a manner similar to the later program of Mohammedanism. This he saw would be worshiping "the prince of this world," sacrificing all his ideals for the sake of military power as has often been done by great men since his day. He had evidently thought out the absorbing problem of his countrymen—their relation to Rome—and his solution gave no place to military resistance. In order to "worship the Lord their God" he saw that they needed a change from within, a new attitude toward God, a new conception of the Kingdom.

Through all these phases of temptation he passed successfully and found peace and satisfaction, felt assured of the approval of the Father. "Angels came and ministered to him."

The source of the story of his call and temptation is of course Jesus himself. It is a bit of autobiography told later to his disciples during one of their seasons of retreat

in the picture language which was the usual literary form of his teaching. It was his custom to describe the subjective in objective pictorial terms. For example, when he was congratulating his disciples on the success of their mission he said: "I saw Satan like lightning fall from heaven," and when he rebuked Peter for tempting him to turn from the hard path of duty he said to him: "Get thee behind me, Satan." If he had given his disciples a psychological statement of how he first became conscious of his mission it would not have been understood or remembered.

4. HIS RELATIONSHIP TO JOHN

"After John had been arrested Jesus went to Galilee preaching the Good News from God." This statement in our oldest gospel following the account of the temptation implies that Jesus stayed in Judea until John's arrest. He probably took up John's message, as this is stated as being his theme when he left Judea and went to Galilee: "The time has now come. God's Kingdom is near: repent and believe the good news." It would be natural for him to begin in Judea and to try out his message in Jerusalem. When John was arrested he saw it was not safe there and that to remain would result in ending his career before his mission was accomplished. Josephus says that Herod Antipas arrested John because he feared lest the great influence John had on the people might put it in his power to raise a rebellion, while the gospel sources give the specific reason that John rebuked him for taking his brother's wife. The two reasons are compatible.

During John's imprisonment news came to him of Jesus' activity and he sent some of his disciples to ask

him if he were really the "Coming One." Jesus' answer indicates that he was not yet ready to announce his messiahship. In fact, he probably was not yet thoroughly convinced in his own mind but was feeling his way and wanted John to judge for himself. He therefore asked John's disciples to recount to their master the wonderful works which seemed to him the premonition of the coming Kingdom. The nature of these works would clearly indicate to John that he was not the stern judge he had been expecting nor the Messiah of popular expectation.

Jesus' opinion of John as given in Matthew and Luke shows that he understood John as fulfilling the prophecy of Elijah's coming as the forerunner of the Messiah. He said to his disciples, referring to John: "He is the Elijah which is to come." He recognized the difference between his own urbane, cheerful method and John's rough, stern address and saw that the people, like wilful children, were pleased with neither. When the news of John's execution at the hands of Herod in the fortress of Machaerus east of the Dead Sea where he had been imprisoned was brought to Jesus by John's disciples no doubt he got a premonition of what was in store for anyone who would fearlessly proclaim a kindred message. Quite early in his ministry the records represent him as forecasting his own destiny.

5. HIS PUBLIC MINISTRY

When Jesus returned to Galilee he made his headquarters at Capernaum, perhaps attracted there partly by the fact that it was the home of Peter and Andrew, but especially because it was a great center of population.

It was the chief port on the Sea of Galilee and through it ran the great highway from Damascus to Jerusalem and from Egypt to Babylon. It was thus in touch with the Graeco-Roman life of the Empire.

In the account of the calling of the first disciples, the abruptness of the call and the immediate response indicate a previous acquaintance. He may have met them in Judea and been to some extent associated with them there. This was a formal call when there was no longer danger of interference with John. It has been customary to speak of Jesus' first disciples as poor, ignorant fishermen. For this there is no warrant. They belonged rather to the comfortable middle class. Zebedeus, the father of James and John, was apparently well to do. He owned "a boat and nets" and had "hired servants." Peter owned a house in Capernaum where Jesus was entertained during most of his ministry and a boat that is often mentioned as being used by Jesus and his disciples.

Jesus began his work quietly teaching and preaching. He did not announce himself as the Messiah. He "came into Galilee preaching the good news from God." He "made a tour around the villages teaching." "He was preaching in the synagogues of Galilee." No attempt will be made to give a detailed story of his life with a correct order of events. The gospels are sermons rather than biographies and are made up of incidents from his life and portions of his teaching which most impressed themselves on the disciples and which they used for various purposes. A detailed story of his life is not germane to this study. It is only necessary to show the great part he played in the rise of Christianity.

From the temptation we can see why Jesus began his work by teaching and did not announce himself as the Messiah until near the close of his life. It shows that he realized the great gulf between his conception of the Kingdom of God and that of the people. He felt that he must bridge this gulf by teaching them the true conception, and he saw that it would be no easy task. He must get them to give up the idea of material world-conquest. To announce himself as Messiah would direct attention to himself rather than to his teaching, and raise hopes of material glory and national aggrandizement that could never be realized and that would completely prevent the true ideal from finding a lodgment in their minds.

Mark's picture of the first days in Capernaum is no doubt a good sample of Jesus' work. This account Mark probably got from Peter. Capernaum was Peter's home and those first days of discipleship were very vivid and were indelibly impressed on his memory. "As soon as the Sabbath came he at once began to teach in the synagogue." Luke tells us when speaking of the visit to Nazareth that it was "his custom" to go to the synagogue on the Sabbath. Here was the best opportunity to begin his work of teaching in any community. The synagogue laid stress on teaching, and visitors were often invited to speak. This opportunity was frequently used by Paul in later days.

The people were astonished at the freshness and force of Jesus' teaching. Unlike the ordinary teachers, the scribes, he did not quote the teachings of the old rabbis but spoke with the directness of personal knowledge. He spoke out of his own experience, his individual consciousness of intimate communion with God.

The substance or content of his teaching is not given, but we can form a good conception of it from the incident recorded by Luke of his teaching in the synagogue at Nazareth when he read from Isaiah:

> The spirit of the Lord is upon me,
> For he has anointed me to preach the good news
> to the poor,
> He has sent me to proclaim release for captives
> And restoring of sight for the blind,
> To set free those that are oppressed,
> To proclaim the Lord's year of favor.

He then proceeded to speak to the people from this text. The time spoken of by the prophet had arrived and he himself was carrying out the prophet's word. The poor were having the "good news" preached to them; the captives to sin were being set free; the spiritually as well as the physically blind were having their sight restored; the oppressed with burdens of legalism put upon them by the religious leaders of the time were being relieved; the great time of deliverance, the Day of the Lord ushering in the Kingdom of God, had begun. The rule of God was about to be established. The people should get ready by leading a new life. The details of that life formed the burden of his teaching. A note of warning also, suggestive of the stern message of John, is indicated by his answer to their implied rejection of his message. If they would reject him God would send him as he had sent his prophets of former times to those who would gladly accept.

In the synagogue in Capernaum on this first Sabbath which we are taking as typical of Jesus' public ministry was "a man with an unclean spirit," probably a man of

diseased mentality whose affliction exhibited itself in an evil life. This man was so affected by the force and vitality of Jesus' words that he cried out in acknowledgment of his sin and protested against what he felt was a rebuke. With the calm and firm assurance of his authoritative personality Jesus restored him to a state of mental and moral sanity and at once established a reputation for "casting out demons."

The nature of these diseases with which the demoniacs of the New Testament were afflicted corresponds to what are now called diseases of personality and of double consciousness. A good example is that of the man who thought he was possessed with a legion of demons. At one time he spoke in his own person and at another even in the same sentence as if he were other persons. When asked his name he replied, "*My* name is Legion, because *we* are *many*."

The belief in evil spirits as the cause of specific forms of disease came to Palestine from the east, especially from Persia, in the second century B.C., and people were thought to be in constant danger of them. Jesus apparently used the language of the people of his time in scientific matters. For example, he speaks of the "four corners of the Earth," the "sun rising in the east," etc. He might as well have stopped to explain the ordinary phenomena of nature as to explain that of demoniacal possession which was just as ordinary to the people of that day. Since the time of Alexander the vices of the east and west had poured into Palestine and there were multitudes of distortions of body and mind. The two classes spoken of as evil spirits and unclean spirits may correspond to mental and moral disorders. That these

cases constitute a large part of Jesus' cures is natural because of his powerful personality and perfectly sane mind and sound body.

The demoniacs often cried out and called Jesus "Son of God" or "Son of David." These people of disordered mentality heard everybody speaking about Jesus and his mighty work and associated him at once with their early teaching about the great deliverer who was expected. Jesus rebuked them because he did not want his work of teaching to be hindered by too much publicity, and because he wanted to avoid being regarded as a healer rather than as a teacher. He did not wish to be regarded as the Messiah before he had set forth the fundamental principles of his Kingdom. He wanted to avoid misunderstanding and disappointment.

From the synagogue on that first Sabbath in Capernaum he went into Peter's house where Peter's mother-in-law was cured of a fever. There is no reason to doubt that Jesus cured many cases of ordinary disease as well as those of disordered mentality. The influence of a powerful mind over certain physical conditions is now recognized by medical science. Jesus did not claim that his cures were contrary to nature. The earliest record does not claim that he healed all, but that "he cured many who were ill with various diseases and cast out many demons."

These cures were not regarded by Jesus as "signs" or spectacular, supernatural demonstrations. When asked by the Pharisees for a "sign" he replied: "An evil and disloyal generation craves a sign, but no sign will be given except the sign of Jonah, for as Jonah was a sign to Ninevites so shall the Son of Man be to this

generation." His message like that of Jonah was a call to repentance. His authority was not shown by "signs" but by teaching which should appeal to the moral consciousness of men.

SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS

1. McGiffert, *A History of Christianity in the Apostolic Age*, pp. 8–35.
2. Burton and Mathews, *Life of Christ*, pp. 49–86.
3. Kent, *Life and Teachings of Jesus*, pp. 43–108.
4. Barton, *Jesus of Nazareth*, pp. 73–141.
5. Robinson, *St. Mark's Life of Jesus*, pp. 19–34.
6. Farrar, *Life of Christ*, chaps. v–ix, xii, xvii.
7. Glover, *The Jesus of History*, pp. 23–62.
8. Rhees, *Life of Jesus of Nazareth*, pp. 70–137.
9. Weiss, *Life of Christ*, Vol. I, chaps. viii–xi; Vol. I, chaps. iv–ix.

CHAPTER IV

THE MESSAGE

WHAT IS CHRISTIANITY?

1. The Kingdom of God
   Deut. 18:15; Isa. 11:1–10; Ps. 110; Dan. 2:44; 7:13–14, 27; Ps. Sol. 17; I Enoch 45–53; 58; 62; 69:29; 71:14–17; 91:12–17; Test. XII P., Lev. 18; Jud. 24; Assmp. M., 10; Mark 1:15; 4:26–29; 7:15–23; 9:43–47; 10:14, 15, 23–25; 12:34; Matt. 5:3, 10, 19, 20, 39, 44; 6:10; 8:11, 12; 13:18–50; 16:19; 18:23–25; 20:1–16; 22:2–14; 25:1–30; Luke 8:1–10; 12:31, 32; 17:20, 21; Rom. 14:17; cf. John 3:1–8; 4:19–26; 11:48
2. Its Citizenship
   Isa. 57:15; Jer. 31:31–33; Mark 7:15–23; 10:15; Matt. 5:3–16; Luke 6:20–49
3. Its Constitution
   Mark 10:15; Matt. 5:17—6:18; 6:24; 7:12; Luke 12:13–21; 16:19–31
4. God and Man
   Luke 15:1–24; Matt. 5:16, 44, 45, 48; 6:25–34; 7:7–11; 10:29–31; 11:25–30; John 1:12
5. Man and God
   Mark 11:22–25; Matt. 5:33–37, 43–48; 6:1–8, 16–34; Luke 11:1–8; 17:5, 6; 18:1–14; John 8:39–44
6. Man and Man
   Mark 12:28–34; Matt. 5:21–28, 38–48; 7:1–6, 12; Luke 10:25–37

1. THE KINGDOM OF GOD

"The time has now come. The Kingdom of God is near, repent and believe in the Good News." These were the words with which Jesus began his public ministry and in them is announced his great theme, the Kingdom of God, or its equivalent, the Kingdom of Heaven. The

Greek word in our sources translated Kingdom may be rendered also "realm," "reign," "rule," or "government," but the old phrase has become so vital a part of our literature that it may perhaps better be retained for our present purpose. All Jesus' discourses are pregnant with this theme and it is the subject of most of the parables. When he sent out the twelve disciples on a missionary journey he said: "Tell men the Kingdom of Heaven is near." He "sent them out to preach the Kingdom of God." When later he sent out seventy disciples he said: "Heal those who are ill and tell them 'The Kingdom of God is nearly on you.'"

Jesus found this phrase ready at hand in the vocabulary of the people. While there were, as has been seen above, different ideas of the Kingdom of God in his day, the popular conception was that of a world-empire with Jerusalem as its capital and the Messiah, a descendant of David, as king. The Kingdom of God should be the rule of Israel with all enemies overthrown. He took up this phrase which was so well known. It gave him immediate access to the ears of the people. Everybody was at once interested and listened eagerly. Messianism was in the air, for the people were distressed and looking for deliverance.

Jesus, however, put a new content into the old words. He said nothing about Rome or the overthrow of political enemies. He did not deal with Jews merely as Jews but with Jews as men. He said little of political conditions. "Give Caesar what belongs to Caesar," he said, when tempted to denounce the paying of taxes to Rome, "give God what belongs to God." When pleased with the attitude of the Roman army captain he said to his

followers: "I have never met with faith like this anywhere in Israel. Many, I tell you, will come from east and west and take their places beside Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the Kingdom of Heaven, while the sons of the Kingdom [the Jews who naturally should belong to the Kingdom] will pass outside into the darkness." To him the Kingdom of God meant the rule of God, not the rule of Israel, and into this phrase he poured the wealth of his teaching.

It should not be supposed, however, that Jesus was not concerned with the burning political problem of his people—their relation to Rome against whose rule they had been in a state of nascent rebellion ever since its inception. On the contrary, there are many indications, of which the story of the temptation is one, that he had thought it out in all its details and consequences through much inner struggle and suffering, and his message is his own solution.

The Jewish people as a whole, following their Pharisaic leaders, expected that God would send a deliverer or Messiah who would set up his Kingdom by a spectacular defeat of their political masters and dire punishment of the "publicans and sinners." With them religion was something external, the punctilious performance of rites and ceremonies. They seem to have had no conception of the necessity of an inner change.

Jesus saw clearly that military opposition to Rome would mean the annihilation of the Jewish nation. He saw too that external force even if it should result in political supremacy could never prepare his countrymen for the rule of God—in fact that it would make them less prepared because more haughty and self-sufficient.

He saw that what they needed in order to make them acceptable to God, and so fit subjects for his "Kingdom," was a moral and spiritual rebirth—an inner change, not sudden or spectacular but of gradual growth, which he illustrated by the parables of mustard seed and leaven. The Pharisees could not see this. All they saw was that Jesus was not in favor of opposition to Rome but taught non-resistance and love of enemies, and they said: "If we let him alone all men will believe in him and the Romans will come and take away our place of worship and our nation."

What then did Jesus mean by the term "Kingdom of God"? He did not define it. He illustrated or pictured it by means of figures or similitudes. He speaks of it as a realm or domain into which people enter or from which they are excluded, but its boundaries are ethical, not physical. "Unless your righteousness excels that of the Scribes and Pharisees," said he to his followers, "you will never get into the Kingdom of Heaven." "How difficult it is for those who have riches to get into the Kingdom of God!" To the scribe who correctly answered his own question as to the chief commandment he said: "You are not far from the Kingdom of God." Again he refers to it as a possession, the reward of righteousness, a gift of God, the highest good. "Do not seek food and drink and be worried," he said, "only seek his Kingdom and these things will be yours over and above." "Fear not, little flock, for your father is delighted to give you the Kingdom." He compares it to "a treasure hidden in a field" and "a pearl of great price" for which a man should be glad to give everything he possesses.

What Jesus means by the term "Kingdom of God" is the rule of God in the lives of men made possible by an inner change, a spiritual rebirth. He told the people not to look for anything spectacular. "The Kingdom of God," he said, "is within you." He always emphasized the inward and spiritual rather than the outward and material. He taught that God judged not from the overt act but from the thought and intent of the heart. He who would steal if he could steal with apparent impunity was a thief even if he never stole anything. He who hated a fellow-man so that he would like to kill him was a murderer even if he never killed anyone.

It will be seen that in all the comparisons and illustrations which Jesus used the emphasis is upon the character of the people that make up the Kingdom. The Kingdom is not to be regarded as a domain but as a happy condition of life to be enjoyed only by people of a certain type of character and conduct, and in order to understand it we must study its citizenship. This is the theme of the famous Sermon on the Mount.

2. ITS CITIZENSHIP

The distinguishing characteristics of the citizens of the Kingdom of God as given by Jesus may be stated as follows:

1. *Receptivity.*—This is commonly called faith. It is the right attitude toward God, the attitude which a normal child has to a normal father, an attitude of willingness to learn and of absolute confidence and trust. "Let the children come to me," he said, "do not stop them; the Kingdom of God belongs to such as these." He who would become a citizen of the Kingdom must

become "like a child." He must be teachable, "humble," conscious of need like the publican, not self-sufficient and self-righteous like the Pharisee, in the famous parable.

2. *Activity or earnestness.*—He must not be merely passively receptive, he must be active. He must "hunger and thirst for righteousness." He must "ask, seek, knock"; he must "strive to get in through the narrow door." There is no place in the Kingdom for the lazy or indifferent.

3. *Peaceableness, forbearance, or tolerance.*—"Blessed are the Peacemakers," he said, "they will be ranked sons of God." This characteristic follows naturally from the attitude of kindness as expressed in the Golden Rule. Intolerance is not tolerated in the Kingdom.

4. *Purity.*—"Blessed are the pure in heart," not like the Pharisees, clean outwardly and ceremonially but "inside filled with rapacity and self-indulgence." "Woe to you," he said to them, "you are like tombs white-washed; they look comely on the outside but inside they are full of dead men's bones and all manner of impurity. So to men you seem just but inside you are full of hypocrisy and iniquity."

5. *Genuineness.*—"Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness," those whose religion is so real that they are willing to suffer persecution rather than to cease doing what is right. This is the opposite of the characteristic sin of the Pharisees, which was acting a part in religion, or hypocrisy. The citizens of the Kingdom are known as such "by their fruits," by practice not by profession. "It is not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' who will get into the Kingdom of Heaven but he who does the will of my Father in

Heaven." Not merely listening to his words, but "acting upon them" is "building on rock."

6. *Beneficence, the active prosecution of doing good.*— It is not enough to be good, the citizen of the Kingdom must continually *do* good. He must be the "salt of the earth," keeping his community from moral decay. He must be the "light of the world," giving continually the light which he has to his fellow-men. He must be "merciful," he must have the right attitude toward his fellow-man. This is the real test of citizenship. It comprehends and unifies all the others. Its classic expression is the famous Golden Rule: "Whatever you would like men to do to you, do just the same to them." Its classic illustration is the parable of the Good Samaritan in which Jesus makes clear what he means by loving one's fellow-man even if he should be a foreigner and an enemy.

3. ITS CONSTITUTION

Jesus was too well acquainted with the deadening influence of legalism as established by the religious leaders of his day to make the mistake of laying down specific and detailed legal enactments for the government of the Kingdom which he believed it was his mission to establish. On the contrary, he compared the principles of the Kingdom with the Old Testament laws and the legalistic teaching of the synagogues, and set up a new high standard of right doing. "Unless your righteousness," he said, "excels that of the scribes and Pharisees you will never get into the Kingdom of God." As has been seen, the fundamental conception of the Kingdom is the rule of God in the lives of men. The

nearest Jesus came to defining it was in the Lord's Prayer: "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done," where the second sentence of the couplet according to the laws of Hebrew parallelism restates and explains the first. It is such a relationship to God as causes men to do his will.

This being Jesus' conception of the Kingdom he felt it to be his mission to teach men such principles as would bring their character and lives into harmony with God's will which would then be "done on earth" naturally and spontaneously "as in Heaven," in the spirit rather than in the letter. Jesus took term after term of the written law and showed the principles or higher ideals which reach back of the law and which if observed fulfil the law and make it unnecessary. As God's will is that men should love one another, the prominent element of Jesus' conception is of course the relation of men to one another, which will be treated later.

It is significant that Jesus established no forms or ceremonies, nor formulated laws. "You have heard," said he in substance, "that it was said to them of old times, thou shalt or thou shalt not do thus and so, but I say unto you God looks into the heart." His conversation with the Samaritan woman as reported in the Fourth Gospel is very instructive in this connection. When she came to the conclusion that he was a prophet she did not think of asking him what she should do to get rid of her evil life, but the first question on her lips showed what she and her people thought of the greatest importance, whether the Samaritan or the Jewish legalists were correct in their denominational contention. "Oh," she thought, "now is my opportunity to find out

which denomination is right," and she said: "Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but the Jews say that the proper place for worship is in Jerusalem." "Woman," said Jesus, "believe me the time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem—but real worshipers will worship him in spirit and in reality."

Jesus did not formulate or promulgate a system of doctrine. He taught that all "the law and the prophets," all religion is summed up in two precepts. "You must love God with all your heart, you must love your fellow man as yourself." Sometimes, however, the very words he used to express principles or fundamental general truths have by a crude, literalistic mode of interpretation been made to express specific legal enactments of the most uncompromisingly rigid type with no appeal to human consciousness.

A typical group of these sayings is found in Matthew 5:38–48 where Jesus is illustrating the superiority of the ideal which his disciples should have to the *lex talionis* of the Old Testament, as it had been taught by the scribes and Pharisees—the superiority of love to law in dealing with our fellow-men; the principle of doing good for evil. What he means by the seemingly difficult precept, "Love your enemies," is explained by the Hebraic parallelism in Luke, "Do good to those who hate you," and is forcibly illustrated by the parable of the Good Samaritan. The wounded man in the parable was a Jew and consequently a bitter enemy of the Samaritan, and yet the Samaritan did good to him. "Love" here is plainly not the kind of love we have for a kinsman or friend. "Bless those who curse you" is a strong para-

doxical statement of this same general principle of rendering good for evil. The famous saying about offering the other cheek also is another paradox which simply means to suffer injury rather than to inflict injury.

In these passages Jesus is teaching principles or general truths and these principles are expressed in epigrams or paradoxes, in accord with the Hebrew method of teaching, for the sake of securing and compelling thought. That it is impossible to take them literally is easily seen from such examples as those in Matt. 5:29, 30, where Jesus does not mean of course that one should literally "pluck out" his eye or "cut off" his hand. These are forcible, figurative expressions of the general principle that one should give up his dearest treasure or desire if it conflicts with his duty to God. The saying about offering the other cheek is illustrated by Jesus' own conduct at his trial. When smitten on one cheek he did not turn the other but in a dignified manner remonstrated with the man who smote him.

These specific statements are to be understood in the light of the general principle commonly known as the Golden Rule, which is given as a summing up of them all: "Well then, whatever you would like men to do to you do just the same to them; that is the meaning of the law and the prophets." They are to be obeyed "in the spirit" rather than "in the letter." A disciple of Jesus must not refuse to "give" from a selfish motive. If he could himself conscientiously ask for aid in the same circumstances, then he must give. The correct application of the principle expressed in this Golden Rule will solve all the difficulties that are found with the apparently specific precepts.

4. GOD AND MAN

"Our Father in heaven"—this was the name by which Jesus taught his disciples to address God and the idea thus expressed is the foundation of all his teaching—the fatherhood of God. The name "Father" applied to God was not originated by Jesus. In the Old Testament in a few places God is referred to as the Father of the nation, and in two or three instances as Father in the creative sense. But he was regarded for the most part as a mighty sovereign, like the oriental kings, living far off from his people and having no intercourse with them except through special messengers called angels. His favor was to be secured by absolute obedience to his laws and tribute paid by means of sacrifices offered by priests. His worship tended to become a cold, pitiless legalism with no personal contact of the individual and consequently no warmth of devotion. In the Psalms, the great hymnbook and expression of Israel's feeling toward God, the name "Father" is not used in addressing God. The Jews would have thought it irreverent to use such a familiar name.

In Jesus' teaching, however, Father is *the* name for God, not occasional but habitual, not general but personal. This was his starting-point. "Did you not know," he said to his parents when they found him in the Temple, "that I had to be in my Father's house?" And afterward repeatedly he used the same intimate expression. In prayer he habitually addressed God as "My Father." It was this personal claim which was resented by the Jews and which they regarded as "blasphemy," but Jesus used the same term to express God's

relationship to all men—his own disciples, Pharisees, publicans and sinners, Jews and Gentiles. This is evident from the fact that when addressing all classes he uses the phrase "Your Father."

Jesus used this designation in an idealized sense to indicate that all that a human father is or can be to his children God is to men. His attitude toward men is that of a normal father to his children, but without the faults and frailties of a human father. "You must be perfect," he said, "as your heavenly Father is perfect." He used this analogy to illustrate God's readiness to answer prayer and to do as much or more than is asked by his children. "Which of you," he said, "when asked by his son for a loaf will give him a stone? Well, if for all your evil you know enough to give your children what is good, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him?"

Jesus' conception of the intense forgiving father-love of God is very forcibly illustrated by the three parables of Grace as given in Luke: the lost sheep, the lost coin, the lost son. These are illustrations of the fact that all men are God's children and he considers each individual soul of value. If they are "lost" he does not rest until they are "found," and when they are found his heart is filled with joy. The last, which is commonly known as the "Prodigal Son," is called by Dickens "the most touching passage in all literature." It might better be named "The Forgiving Father," for it is intended as a picture of the forgiving love of God, which he bestows upon his children even when it is utterly unmerited. It was a complete refutation of the commercial merit and reward, *quid pro quo* idea of religion held by the Jews as

well as by other peoples in Jesus' day, and not entirely discarded at the present time.

Jesus taught that God was not a task-master nor a lawgiver but a tender-hearted, devoted Father who loves each individual child no matter how wayward or undeserving. It was this fundamental conception of God as Father in a real, intimate sense that gave the message of Jesus its strongest appeal to the hearts of men.

5. MAN AND GOD

"Love your enemies that you may become sons of God." In these words is implied the real meaning of sonship as applied to the relationship of men to God. It is an ethical relationship similar to that of God to man. While, as we have seen, God is the Father of all men because his character and attitude are always right, all men are not sons of God because their character and attitude are not always right. So Jesus exhorted men to be like God in character in order that they might "become" his sons. To the Jews who rejected God's message and refused to do his will, Jesus said that they were not sons of God but sons of the devil, just as they were not sons of Abraham because they did not have Abraham's character.

The right attitude of man to God is that of a normal child to a normal father—the attitude that a child has to his father *before* he learns that father is not all wise, all powerful, and all loving. He is then receptive and teachable—willing and anxious to learn what father wants him to do and eager to obey, glad to ask father for what he wants and to share with father what he may have, proud to be called his father's child. He is abso-

lutely trustful—ready to jump over a precipice into father's arms, in fact to do whatever father says without question, because father knows and father loves. This is the attitude which is called "faith."

When Jesus was asked what was the greatest commandment he said: "You must love God with all your heart." This precept includes all of man's duty to God, for if he loves God he will be eager to do his will; it will be his delight. This attitude settles all questions of the use of riches and talents of all kinds, for if a man loves God he will gladly give him a whole-hearted devotion—himself, all that he has, all that he is and can be. This is what is meant by love.

6. MAN AND MAN

"Whatever you would like men to do to you, do just the same to them; that is the meaning of the Law and the Prophets." In these words is summed up man's whole duty to his fellow-man. They express the general principle by which the follower of Jesus is to be guided in all his relations with his fellow-men. They explain in concrete terms the attitude of God to man and man to God, so often referred to as "love" and typified by the normal, earthly relationships of fatherhood and sonship. Jesus' second "greatest commandment" is "You must love your fellow-man as yourself." Just as the first includes all of a man's duty to God, so the second includes all of a man's duty to his fellow-man. He will treat him as he wants to be treated himself. This attitude settles all social and economic questions, for if a man loves his fellow-man he will never do anything to injure him, but on the contrary will always delight to do him good.

What is meant by this love or right attitude of man to man is beautifully illustrated in the parable of the Good Samaritan. The wounded "man from Jerusalem" had no claim upon the Samaritan in the eyes of the Jews of Jesus' day. The Jews and Samaritans were bitter enemies. When Jesus asked a Samaritan woman for a drink of water she was greatly surprised: "What? You are a Jew, and ask me for a drink--me, a Samaritan!" And the writer explains: "Jews do not associate with Samaritans." The Jew too was usually the aggressor. The Samaritan knew that if the wounded Jew were not in that plight and he should venture to speak to him, he would spit in his face and call him a "dog." The Samaritan knew that he took his life in his hands when he stopped and crossed that road to help the wounded Jew, for it was a dangerous road infested by highwaymen. On either side were dark, gloomy caves, admirable lurking places for robbers. One of these was probably near by. If he stopped, the robbers who could not be far off might attack him and they would give the hated foreigner less consideration than they had given their own countryman. The Samaritan too must have had important business as he was far from home in an enemy's country. He knew that to help the wounded man would cause considerable delay. But none of these considerations deterred him; he "showed mercy," he "proved a neighbor to him that fell among the robbers."

Such was Jesus' message. He announced the coming of the Kingdom of God, an ethical and spiritual relationship resulting in a moral society in which God is not only the ruler but especially the loving father of all the "citizens." Men who come into this relationship

become sons of God. They delight to learn and to do his will; they are proud of being his children and give him whole-hearted, unreserved devotion. As sons of God they are brothers and treat one another as they want to be treated themselves. The fundamental principle of this society, the common foundation of these relationships is "love"—that love which is so beautifully described in the inimitable words of Jesus' greatest disciple:

> Love is long-suffering and kind, love knows no jealousy;
> Love makes no parade, gives itself no airs,
> Is never rude, never selfish, never irritated, never resentful;
> Love is never glad when others go wrong, love is gladdened by goodness,
> Always slow to expose, always eager to believe the best,
> Always hopeful, always patient.

SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS

1. Stevens, *The Teaching of Jesus*, pp. 58–80, 107–16, 130–39.
2. Scott, *The Kingdom and the Messiah*, pp. 1–28, 88–116.
3. Kent, *Life and Teachings of Jesus*, pp. 134–215.
4. Glover, *The Jesus of History*, pp. 87–138.
5. Barton, *Jesus of Nazareth*, pp. 169–80.
6. Wendt, *Teaching of Jesus* (3d sec.), pp. 173–206, 287–352.
7. Simkhovitch, *Toward the Understanding of Jesus*, pp. 37–83.
8. Burton, *A Source Book for the Teaching of Jesus*, pp. 110–213.

CHAPTER V

THE CONFLICT

HOW THE MESSAGE WAS RECEIVED

1. Early Popularity
   Mark 1:21–45; 2:1–4; 3:7–21; 4:1; 5:21–43; 6:30–44, 53–56; 7:24, 33–37; 8:1, 2; 10:1; Matt. 3:5, 6; 7:29; Luke 3:15
2. Increasing Opposition
   Mark 2:5–12, 15–18, 23–28; 3:1–6, 22–35; 7:1–6; Matt. 23; cf. Matt. 12:22–37; 6:22, 23; Deut. 6:6–9
3. The Crisis
   Mark 6:14—7:23; Matt. 14:1—15:20; cf. John 6:15–27, 47–67
4. The Retirement
   Mark 7:24—9:32; cf. Matt. 15:21—17:23
5. The Final Advance
   Mark 10:1—11:1; Matt. 19:1—21:1; Luke 9:51—10:42; 13:22–35; 19:1–11

1. EARLY POPULARITY

"What does this mean?" "It's a new teaching with authority behind it!" "He orders even unclean spirits!" "Yes, and they obey him!" With such exclamations as these was Jesus' first public appearance in Galilee in the synagogue at Capernaum received by the people. Our oldest gospel gives a vivid description of his activity in these early days. His popularity increased rapidly, people thronged around him whether in the city or the desert.

After the events of the first Sabbath in Capernaum when the people crowded around Peter's house and "the whole town was gathered at the door, and he

cured many who were ill and cast out many demons . . . . in the early morning long before daylight he got up and went away out to a lonely spot." When his disciples "hunted him out and discovered him he said, 'Let us go somewhere else, to the country towns, so that I may preach there as well; that is why I came out here.'" These words give a graphic picture of the beginning of his popularity, and it rapidly increased.

When he returned to Capernaum after having made a tour of the smaller towns of Galilee and "it was reported that he was at home, a large number at once gathered till there was no more room for them, not even at the door." In order to get a sick man to him "they tore up the roof under which he was speaking and through the opening they lowered the paralytic lying on his rug."

Later he "retired with his disciples to the sea, and a great crowd from Galilee followed him. A great number also came to him from Judea, Jerusalem, Idumea, the other side of the Jordan, and the neighborhood of Tyre and Sidon as they heard of his doings. So he told his disciples to have a small boat ready. This was to prevent his being crushed by the crowd, for he healed so many that all who had complaints were pressing on him to get a touch of him. . . . . Then he went up into the mountain and summoned the men he wanted and they went to him."

Here the earliest gospel records his choosing of a select number "to be with him and that he might send them out to preach." He no doubt felt the unstable character of the crowds and the impossibility of reaching them all himself. He decided to train a select number thoroughly in the principles of the Kingdom, that he

might have their assistance in reaching large numbers. "Then they went indoors but the crowd gathered together again so that it was impossible even to have a meal. . . . . Once more he went to teach by the seaside and an immense crowd gathered around him; so he entered a boat on the sea and sat down while all the crowd stayed on shore."

On another occasion he said to his disciples: "Come away to some lonely spot and get a little rest." "For there were so many people coming and going that they could get no time even to eat. So they went away privately in the boat to a lonely spot." They went to the other side of the lake. But some people saw them going and "got to the place before them by hurrying there on foot from all the towns."

There were several reasons for this great popularity. John the Baptist's stirring message of the immediate coming of the new era of righteousness had permeated all Palestine. "Jerusalem and the whole of Judea and all the Jordan district went out to him and were baptized." Jesus took up John's message as soon as John was arrested while "the people were in a state of expectation." Then the freshness of Jesus' message was very striking. "The people were astounded at his teaching for he taught them as an authority and not as their scribes." Their ordinary teachers always quoted the old writers as if having no basis of conviction in personal experience, but Jesus spoke with absolute assurance out of the wealth of his own intimate communion with his Father. But without doubt the greatest source of his popularity was his cures which lead them to look on him as a wonder-worker. This was directly contrary

to his desire. Again and again he asked the persons healed not to say anything about it. As noted in chapter iii, he wished to avoid undue publicity because it interfered with his teaching, which he regarded as his real mission. But these warnings apparently availed little. The natural desire for help in bodily disease in those days when no other help could be obtained, as even today with all our advancement in medical science, attracted the people in ever increasing throngs.

2. INCREASING OPPOSITION

At the very first the scribes and Pharisees probably regarded Jesus as a self-taught rabbi whose methods and teachings were similar to those of many others. They listened to him and even invited him to their homes. But very soon they began to oppose him, and their opposition steadily increased. They accused him of blasphemy. The first occasion mentioned for this charge was Jesus' words to a paralytic whom four friends succeeded in bringing before him in spite of the crowds by tearing up the roof under which he was speaking and lowering the man down on his rug. Jesus saw that the man had "faith," that is to say, the right attitude toward God, the attitude of receptivity, teachableness, and trust that secures God's favor, and he said: "My son, your sins are forgiven." These words at once kindled the suspicion and jealousy of the scribes who were present. "What does this fellow mean by talking like this?" they said "It is blasphemy!" The idea of this itinerant rabbi taking upon himself to grant what could only be obtained from God by punctiliously satisfying all the Levitical ritual! If this were allowed, all their law and tradition

would be discredited by the people. Their occupation would be gone.

The second accusation was that of disregarding the Law of Moses and the rules of the Jewish religion, because he ate with tax-gatherers and "sinners" and because his disciples did not observe the Jewish fast days. The most frequent occasion of their accusation was his attitude toward the Sabbath. When they complained because he healed on the Sabbath he swept aside their petty legalistic rules with the fundamental principle: "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath."

They could not deny his obvious power to cure demoniacs but accounted for it by saying he was in league with the devil. This brought from Jesus his most solemn warning, his reference to the "unforgivable sin" by which he meant that if they wilfully closed their eyes to the light they would put themselves in a position where forgiveness was impossible because they would have shut the only door by which God could enter.

Finally they accused him of treason against Rome and "joined the Herodians in a plot against him to destroy him." These unscrupulous partisans of Herod had the same cause for fearing Jesus that, according to Josephus, led to John's arrest and execution—his power over the people, which made him a disturbing element and a possible rival to their master.

An examination of Jesus' message as given in the last chapter and a comparison with the religion taught by the scribes will show that this opposition was just what might be expected. Their attitude was not primarily personal. Its basis was the fundamental antagonism

of their point of view to his. Their teaching could not exist alongside of his. Oil and water could not mix.

The pharisaic type of religion which Jesus opposed was a cold, iron-bound legalism, or rather a combination of literalism, legalism, and formalism. Words intended to teach principles or general truths as a guide of life were interpreted as formulating legal enactments—literalism; then mere obedience to those "laws" was taken as putting God under obligation to favor and bless—legalism; and finally the mere legal enactments were observed without the heart's being concerned in the observance—formalism. The term "legalism" is commonly used to include all three.

A good example of the legalism here referred to is found in the pharisaic interpretation of Deuteronomy 6:4–9. After the recital of the Decalogue and the statement of the Confession of Faith the writer says:

> And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be upon thy heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thy hand, and they shall be for frontlets between thy eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the door-posts of thy house, and upon thy gates.

The meaning of this passage seems obvious as being a forceful, figurative way of saying that they were to know the will of God so well that they could not possibly forget it, that their "delight should be in the law of Jehovah and in his law they should meditate day and night." But the later Pharisees interpreted the words literally and wrote certain passages from the law on small pieces of parchment which they inclosed in cases with leathern

thongs attached and bound on the forehead and left arm and also wrote them on their doorposts and lintels, and then, as their history shows, they forgot all about them. They thus fulfilled the letter while wholly blind to the spirit of God's precepts. These cases were the "phylacteries" to which Jesus refers in his scathing rebuke of the scribes and Pharisees: "All they do," he said, "is done to catch the notice of men for they make their phylacteries broad."

For these Pharisees religion was something outward. It consisted in the observance of the Law of Moses and the rites and traditions handed down by their fathers which became for them more important than the original Law. Forms and ceremonies become so prominent as to exclude all thought of the ethical and spiritual. With Jesus religion was not something outward, exhibited in forms and ceremonies, but something inward in heart and life, not of letter but of spirit, not rites but service. He paid no attention to forms and ceremonies, rules and traditions. His disciples did not observe the Jewish fasts nor did they pay any attention to the ceremonial washings and other petty details so punctiliously observed by the Pharisees. He ate with "publicans and sinners." He did not feel that he was defiled by touching a leper. He was not disturbed by the touch of the woman with the hemorrhage, and, what was perhaps most flagrant in their eyes, he disregarded their petty rules for the Sabbath. This attitude of Jesus filled the Pharisees with indignation and dismay. They feared that it was but the first step to complete disregard of their elaborate system of ritualistic service, which was, for them, the sum total of religion.

Jesus brought a terrible indictment against the Pharisees which kindled their enmity to such a pitch of frenzy that they joined hands with their former enemies, the Sadducees, to plot his death. He charged them with being "actors" in religion, entirely selfish, seeking only the praise of men by their outward display of religion. Instead of caring for their fellow-men they laid excessive burdens on them by teaching obligation of such multitudinous ceremonies that no man in ordinary circumstances could fulfil them. He said they were like "whitewashed tombs," seemingly righteous but "full of hypocrisy and iniquity."

3. THE CRISIS

At last the opposition of the pharisaic leaders began to have its effect on the people. Jesus refused to listen to their clamor for "a sign." He wanted to give them the true conception of the Kingdom which he felt it was his mission to establish. But the rule of God did not suit them. They wanted the rule of Israel. The gospel records suggest that the crisis came about in this way: After Jesus had "made a tour through all the towns and villages," he became convinced that it was impossible for him to reach them all. "As he saw the crowds he was moved with pity for them; they were harassed and dejected like sheep without a shepherd." He decided to send out the little band of disciples that he had been training. They seem to have had considerable success, and this brought Jesus and his work and influence very forcibly to the notice of Herod Antipas and aroused his suspicions and fears. He had just got rid of John the Baptist because of John's growing influence over the people, and now his guilty conscience and

superstitious nature filled him with the apprehension that his victim's spirit had returned to plague him in the person of the popular prophet of Nazareth.

The gospel records here give us an idea of the impression Jesus had made upon the people of Galilee. Some thought he was Elijah because of his fearless attitude toward those in power among the people. Others emphasizing one or another of his characteristics identified him with others of the great Old Testament prophets. This passage is a strong indication that his popularity was now exceedingly great, for the greatest compliment the people could pay any man was to identify him with one of the famous old prophets of their nation, and Herod's interest in him shows that he must have been talked about in the palace at Tiberias as well as in the streets of Capernaum.

Jesus no doubt knew very well what Herod's interest in him meant. Tiberias was only a few miles from Capernaum. It was not long since John had been imprisoned and beheaded. Following closely upon his enforced retirement Jesus had begun his public ministry. Still greater crowds were following him than had followed John. Herod's unprincipled partisans, the Herodians, were watching his every step, plotting to get evidence against him. His reference to Herod later as "that fox" shows he knew his treacherous character. The blow might fall any day. Galilee was becoming a very dangerous place. Often he crossed the lake to seek safety in the regions not under Herod's surveillance. His work had not yet been done. It was too early to risk arrest, imprisonment, and, it might be, death.

On the return of his disciples from their preaching expedition the crowds thronged around him in such numbers that he slipped away "privately in the boat" and crossed the lake "to a lonely spot," but "a number of people" noticed the boat putting out from shore and recognized its occupants. The news spread like wildfire, and hundreds of people started on foot around the lake. When Jesus and the disciples landed they found that "the lonely spot" was occupied by thousands of people. "So when Jesus disembarked he saw a great multitude of people and out of pity for them, as they were like sheep without a shepherd, he began to teach them at length."

On this day in this desert place occurred a remarkable manifestation of Jesus' power in his satisfying the hunger of the people. The circumstances are given in detail by all four gospel narratives. According to the Fourth Gospel the people were raised to such a pitch of enthusiasm that they crowded around him and tried to compel him to assume their leadership and declare himself a king. There was an old tradition that when the Messiah should come he would feed the people as Moses had done with manna in the wilderness. They felt that this was being fulfilled this wonderful day.

The other three gospels, while not specifically mentioning the clamor of the people for the immediate setting up of the messianic Kingdom, seem to imply that something of this kind took place. Our earliest gospel says that "he *forced* the disciples *at once* to embark in the boat and cross before him towards Bethsaida while he dismissed the crowd and after saying goodbye to them he went up into the hill to pray." There was evidently

some strong reason why the disciples wanted to stay but he compelled them to go. They were probably captured by the popular enthusiasm and he feared their persuasion and their influence on the people. He wanted to be alone as soon as possible to fight again the same temptation that came to him at the beginning of his ministry, to accept "the Kingdoms of the earth and the glory of them." He quickly left the crowd and in communion with the Father again conquered.

There is a passage in the Fourth Gospel which may reflect his attitude at this time. He is represented as speaking to some of the same people the next day when they found him in Capernaum, and telling them in the strong picture language he so often used that not "loaves and fishes," not the material things of life, but doing the will of God as taught in his message (his "flesh and blood," the very essence of his life) will bring messianic deliverance. "After that," the writer says, "many of his disciples drew back and would not associate with him any longer." In fact, so great was the defection that he said to his disciples: "You do not want to go too, do you?" This was of course to give them an opportunity of asserting their fidelity in the crisis.

The Synoptic Gospels tell us that at this time "the Pharisees gathered to meet him with some scribes who had come from Jerusalem." This was probably a delegation sent to investigate his teaching, and is an indication of the impression his public work had made in all Palestine.

The question raised was the importance of the ceremonial law. He fearlessly swept away all dependence on their legalistic ceremonial religion. When

he found that he could make no impression on the legalistic leaders he appealed to the people around. The disciples remembered the substance of what he said in one of the striking pictorial generalizations so characteristic of his teaching: "Nothing outside of a man can defile him by entering into him; it is what comes out of a man that defiles him." It is not the outward form and ceremony that are of religious significance but the thoughts and intent of the heart. Thus he took issue with the pharisaic legalists at the vital point of contention. His point of view and theirs could not exist together. One who took his position at that time was doomed to death.

He decided to leave Galilee. He could do no more there now because of the changed attitude of the people, and he knew that Herod was watching for an opportunity to kill him. While unafraid he would not remain and so "tempt God." How little real progress his teaching had made in Galilee is seen by his rebuke of the cities of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, where most of his time had been spent. These words were perhaps spoken to his disciples as they left for Tyre on the road leading north from Capernaum when he reached a point on the hills overlooking the Sea of Galilee and the surrounding plains. It was his sad farewell to the places where he had labored long and which had preferred the "reign of Israel" to the "reign of God."

4. THE RETIREMENT

There now followed a period of comparative retirement. Jesus went north through the region of Tyre and Sidon and then south again to the Decapolis region

along the east shore of the Lake of Galilee. In this way he tried out his message in various parts of the country where he had not been before, kept out of the reach of Herod, and had more opportunity to teach his disciples. When in the region of Tyre and Sidon he was in gentile territory. He went there for a period of seclusion and rest. "He wished no one to know of it."

While in this region the question of Jesus' mission to the heathen came up in the request of a native woman that he should heal her daughter. Jesus' words may indicate that he was thinking of the rejection of his message by his countrymen. The children (the Jews) had refused the food he brought them. Should he give it to the heathen "dogs"? The term "dogs" was commonly applied by the Jews to the Gentiles. The fact that Jesus did not use the ordinary harsh word for dogs but a term meaning house dogs and in all probability his look and tone indicating that he himself did not sanction that epithet gave the woman courage to pursue her request, and the fact that he granted it shows that he really made no distinction on account of race or religion.

Jesus conceived of his work as being practically limited to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel," but this limitation was one of expediency set by the necessities of the case. He could not go to all peoples, but through his own people the message could be carried to the Gentiles. He never refused to help Gentiles when they came to him in Palestine.

From the Decapolis region he went north again to Caesarea Philippi. On the road he had a conversation with his disciples, the importance of which is indicated

by the indelible impression it made on their memory, and its significance has been recognized by later generations. It has been called "the hour of Christianity's birth." It was now near the end of the period of wandering. His plan of action for the future must be decided upon, and the prospect before him was certainly not promising. He had not succeeded in winning the people of the towns of Galilee who, as has been noted, were freer from the deadening influence of the rabbinical teaching than those of Judea.

His apostrophe to the cities of Galilee, to which reference has been made above, shows his feeling of deep disappointment. The religious and political leaders, the Pharisees and Herodians, were seeking his life. Only Jerusalem remained, and he well knew the danger awaiting him there. It was natural that he should want to know how far he could trust his disciples. Did they believe in him? He had made no claim of messiahship thus far. During his period of popularity when the crowds were following him with acclaim it was easy for the disciples to be loyal, but how did they feel now when not only the leaders but the people had turned against him and he was practically a fugitive? He decided to test them, and so he put the question: "Who do people say I am?" They gave him the various opinions of the people which have been noticed above, and then he put the issue squarely before them: "And you," he said, "who do you say I am?" Then came the answer through Peter their spokesman: "You are the Messiah!"

That this is the first time he claimed messiahship is seen from the fact that "he forbade them to tell anyone

that he was the Messiah." The earlier references in the gospels to his use of this title come from the fact that the writers wrote either to set him forth as the Messiah or took for granted that he was the Messiah and were not careful about the chronological order of events and statements. He now put his disciples to the test by telling them that he was going to Jerusalem in the face of what seemed to be certain rejection, suffering, and death, thus in effect denying that he was the Messiah in the sense Peter intended, although he had acknowledged it in his own sense of the term. Peter's protest indicates that even his few most intimate disciples did not yet have their master's view of the Kingdom. They believed he would succeed from their point of view, which was still practically that of the popular expectation. They could not think of suffering and death for their Messiah. Jesus' answer: "Get behind me, you Satan," shows that he felt the force of the natural, human temptation to escape from suffering.

Soon after the conference at Caesarea Philippi the gospels tell us that he went to a secluded spot in the mountains with Peter, James, and John for prayer. This was his third great temptation. The hour had again come for decision. He must fight over again the fight he had won in the wilderness, and again in "the lonely spot" across the Lake of Galilee—whether he would yield to the popular messianic sentiment and save his life or carry out the teaching of his conception of the Kingdom in the face of what seemed to be almost sure death. As before in the wilderness, and no doubt in the hills near the lake, the voice of God's approval came to him—"My son, the Beloved"—and he was strength-

ened for the terrible task—to go through the Valley of Humiliation—the Valley of the Shadow of Death.

5. THE FINAL ADVANCE

"Jesus set his face steadfastly to go to Jerusalem." "They were on the way up to Jerusalem, Jesus walking in front of them; the disciples were in dismay and the company who followed were afraid." These words give a graphic picture of Jesus on the way to Jerusalem, striding on ahead with a look so intense and indicating such dedication to duty even at the extreme cost that his selected band of disciples were filled with apprehension. They had remained faithful to him after having been put to the severe test of his fateful words of warning, and they followed him when he left Galilee with his face turned toward Jerusalem accompanied by a considerable number of others who were open minded enough to accept a part at least of his message. The full details of this "last journey" to Jerusalem are not given. There are mentioned only scattered incidents and occasional teachings. But there is enough to indicate clearly Jesus' mind and purpose and the manner in which he was occupied during the journey.

He no doubt timed his arrival at Jerusalem purposely so as to be there at the great Passover festival, for then the city would be full of people from all over Palestine, and many Galileans would of course be there. This would be the opportune time for a final appeal to the consciences of the people. At this time the leaders would be assembled. He determined to bring matters to an issue. They must accept or reject his message. He went on, knowing full well their spirit and how little real hope there was of winning them.

Mark's account says that when Jesus left Capernaum "he went into the borders of Judea and beyond the Jordan." The region "beyond the Jordan" was Perea, a part of the domain of Herod Antipas. The danger of arrest in this region is seen from the fact that some friendly Pharisees came to him and said: "Get away from here, for Herod intends to kill you." His fearless confidence in his mission is seen in this characteristic answer: "Go and tell that fox that I cast out demons and perform cures today, and tomorrow and on the third day I shall complete my task," meaning in the Hebraic idiom that he would keep on with his work indefinitely without regard to Herod until his mission was accomplished. For the benefit of the Pharisees he added a fine piece of irony: "But I must journey on today and tomorrow and the next day; it would never do for a prophet to perish except in Jerusalem," or, in other words, "There is no danger from Herod, my friends, for if I am to die it must be where all prophets perish—in Jerusalem."

There is no definite indication of how long Jesus spent on this journey. From Luke's statement that "he went on teaching from one town and village to another" and from the incidents that seem to find a place here it is probable that he spent several weeks, perhaps even months, on the way. He used this opportunity to teach his disciples the demands of discipleship and the real meaning of religion as service to their fellow-men even if it should mean sacrifice, suffering, and death. He taught them that if they would be his disciples they must be ready to give up everything for the Kingdom, even what was as precious to them as hand, foot, or eye. To

the "rich young ruler" who came running to him in great earnestness to ask the way of life he said: "Go and sell all you have and give to the poor and then come and follow me." Discipleship meant absolute committal and devotion to the interests of the Kingdom. He warned them that they must cut all bridges behind them: "No one is any use to the Kingdom of God who puts his hand to the plough and then looks behind him."

In the region across the Jordan he was farthest removed from the influence of the Pharisees, and large crowds again followed him. Some of his most important teachings as recorded by Luke may have been given during this period. In this way he prepared the minds of his followers for the trying times soon to come, so that even if they should be temporarily overcome these principles would be so indelibly fixed in their minds that they would be fitted to become custodians of the treasures of the Kingdom. That they did not give up hope of his becoming the Messiah of popular expectation who would even at the last moment confound his enemies and establish an earthly kingdom is seen from the request of James and John to be given the two chief offices in it and the dispute of the disciples as to "which of them should be greatest."

After the journey through Perea he crossed the Jordan into Judea and came to Jericho. At this city, the second largest in Judea, the records of Jesus' ministry outside of Jerusalem are brought to a close with an account of cures of two men, one morally and the other physically blind, Zacchaeus the publican and Bartimaeus the beggar. Mark tells us that "he left Jericho with his disciples and a considerable crowd." The publicity given by these

incidents no doubt augmented the throng that followed him to Jerusalem.

SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS

1. Burton and Mathews, *Life of Christ*, pp. 87–97, 109–218.
2. Kent, *Life and Teaching of Jesus*, pp. 84–92, 216–49.
3. Robinson, *St. Mark's Life of Jesus*, pp. 35–97.
4. Barton, *Jesus of Nazareth*, pp. 265–311.
5. Bousset, *Jesus*, pp. 59–70, 166–80.
6. Rhees, *Life of Jesus of Nazareth*, pp. 101–5, 118–65.
7. Weiss, *Life of Christ*, Vol. III, chaps. iii, iv, vi, xii.
8. Farrar, *Life of Christ*, xxiii, xxx–xxxvi, xlii–xliv.

CHAPTER VI

THE TRAGEDY

THE PASSION WEEK

1. The Triumphal Entry
   Mark 11:1–11; Matt. 21:1–11; Luke 19:29–44; Zech. 9:9
2. Conflict with the Religious Leaders
   Mark 11:15—12:40; Matt. 21:12—23:37; Luke 19:45—20:47
3. The Plot and Preparation
   Mark 14:1–31; Luke 8:2, 3; 22:1–38; Matt. 26:1–35; I Cor. 11:23–25
4. The Arrest
   Mark 14:32–51; Luke 22:39–53; Matt. 26:36–56
5. The Trial
   Luke 22:54—23:25; Mark 14:53—15:20; Matt. 26:57—27:31; John 18:12—19:16
6. The Execution
   Mark 15:21–47; Luke 23:26–56; Matt. 27:32–66; John 19:16–42

Attention has been called to the fragmentary nature of the records of the life of Jesus. The beginning of his public ministry at Capernaum is given in detail probably because that was Peter's home and these first days were naturally strongly impressed on his memory. After this only isolated events are mentioned, especially during the period of wandering after leaving Galilee, which probably occupied several months. Only occasional glimpses are given of the journey to Jerusalem.

The last week, however, from the time of arrival in Jerusalem is very full and detailed. The events of each day are recorded. The reasons for this fulness and detail

are obvious. The events of this last week occurred in a large city where there were many interested witnesses. It was the home of John Mark, the author of the first complete record that has come to us. While but a youth at that time, he was in all probability an eye-witness of most of the events. Jesus' headquarters in Jerusalem were at his house. These last days, too, were of the greatest interest to the later church. There was an intense strain on the disciples. The details were so vivid they could not be forgotten.

1. THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY

When Jesus with his followers, of whom there were by this time a considerable number, arrived at Bethany, a village about two miles from Jerusalem, he sent two disciples on before him into the village to get an ass's colt. Bethany was the home of Mary and Martha and their brother, Lazarus, where he had often visited. Probably it was to this home, which he knew well, that he sent for the colt. On this animal he rode into Jerusalem.

There is a passage in one of the prophets with which Jesus was undoubtedly familiar, which describes the entry of the Messiah into Jerusalem as follows:

> Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion!
> Shout, O Daughter of Jerusalem!
> See, your King is coming to you.
> He is just and brings salvation;
> Humble and riding upon an ass,
> Upon the foal of a beast of burden.

These words expressed Jesus' conception of the Messiah as humble and unostentatious. From his actions during

the week that followed we may understand that by entering Jerusalem in this manner he meant to declare publicly his messiahship to those who might understand, and in this way to begin to bring matters to an issue. His teaching of the principles of the Kingdom was now complete. It was time to take his place as Messiah and abide by the result. Jerusalem was thronged with visitors from all lands who came for the great Passover festival. Many of these probably had heard of the prophet from Nazareth and were anxious to see him.

To the people of that time the ass was a symbol of peace, the horse a symbol of war. By riding on an ass instead of a horse he declared himself to be the Messiah of Zechariah's prophecy, but not of popular expectation; a Messiah of peace, not a military leader with political ambitions. The people, of course, as a whole, and this was true even of some of his disciples, did not get the full significance of this action. They crowded around him enthusiastically and hailed him as "the Son of David" who was coming to set up the messianic Kingdom.

Before this time he had rebuked anyone who attempted to call him Messiah, but now he tacitly accepted the title. The common people were delighted and the Pharisees chagrined. However, he took care to give no occasion to anyone to suppose he was going to be a military leader. When he reached the Temple all he did was to dismount without ostentation, look around on the preparation, and go quietly back to Bethany. It was probably late in the evening when he arrived and he did not consider it safe to trust himself in the city after night. He knew that the pharisaic leaders

were seeking an opportunity to seize him when he was not protected by the presence of the people.

2. CONFLICT WITH THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS

What was in Jesus' mind with reference to the attitude which the Jewish leaders had taken is seen from a parable which was suggested by coming across a barren fig tree as he was leaving Bethany the next morning. Like the fig tree the nation had been given every chance; time after time it had been cultivated and enriched by God's messengers, and time after time God had sought from it in vain the fruits of righteousness. The day of grace had passed. The time of reckoning had come: "Cut it down; why should it take up space?"

Doubtless, on previous visits to the Temple, he had noticed the traffic that was going on in its outer court in the name of religion, and he may well have foreseen that if he went to Jerusalem he could not avoid open conflict with the priests. This may account for his previous allusions to a coming conflict with the Jewish authorities which might result in his death. He well knew the temper and unscrupulous character of the men with whom he would have to deal.

The occasion of the incident commonly called the "Cleansing of the Temple" was, of course, his indignation at the corrupt practices permitted and in fact participated in by the Temple authorities, who belonged to the Sadducean party. The noise made by the sacrificial animals exposed for sale, the babel of voices of the money-changers, and the general hubbub of merchandising robbed the people of their rightful privilege of quiet worship in their sacred Temple, "a place of

prayer for all the nations." It is quite probable, too, that the poor who had to buy doves because "their means did not suffice for a lamb," and the foreign Jew who had to exchange Roman coins for the Hebrew half-shekel with which the Temple tax was paid, were overcharged. In more ways than one the "Father's house" had become "a den of robbers."

His action this morning was undoubtedly premeditated.

When they came to Jerusalem and he entered the Temple, he began to drive out those who were buying and selling; he upset the tables of the money-changers and the stalls of those who sold doves and would not allow anyone to carry a vessel through the Temple. He gave them instruction, also. "Is it not written," he asked, "my house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations? You have made it a den of robbers."

In these words we have a striking picture of Jesus' forceful personality. He exhibited the flashing eye and fiery indignation of the ancient prophets and the majesty of a natural king of men. The time and place for this well-merited rebuke was well chosen. In the intense excitement of the moment no one thought of offering opposition. The menials were panic-stricken, their masters were dazed. In the presence of the people their hypocrisy and avarice were laid bare and they had no defense. They saw that Jesus had the people with him and "they were afraid of him." "They could not discover what was to be done, for all the people hung upon his words."

In making this attack on the selfishness of the leaders of the people in sacrificing the right of the people to worship to their own commercialism, Jesus faced his deadliest enemy, and he knew that he risked his life.

Although by reason of his superlative tact he was immediately successful and his enemies were completely discomfited, yet the fires of opposition were kindled afresh and were only quenched by his blood. This incident illustrates a phase of his character not often noted. He was not always "meek and lowly," but when occasion demanded he became the very embodiment of righteous indignation.

The next day the Temple authorities, having somewhat recovered from the shock of this surprise attack, came to him "as he was walking within the Temple" with the inevitable challenge: "What authority have you for acting in this way; who gave you authority to act in this way?" In his characteristic manner, Jesus answered their question by asking another more incisive: "What about the baptism of John, was it from heaven or from man?" If they should answer: "From heaven," they would convict themselves before the people of insincerity in not accepting John's message, and they dared not alienate the people, who believed that John was a prophet, by saying that his ministry was without divine authority.

Jesus' intention was not merely to silence them by the dilemma; it was the most forcible way of pointing out to the people their insensibility to divine truth. They assumed that the right to rebuke wickedness in high places must be authenticated by a "sign"—an external, spectacular, supernatural portent. He said in substance: "What about John's work? He gave no sign." They did not dare to say that John was an impostor. They consequently had to concede that a prophet's authority was in his message, and did not

require external authentication, and admitting it in respect to John, they could not deny it to Jesus. Thus he answered their question in a very significant way, affirming an important principle in regard to religious authority.

The inconsistency and hypocrisy of these "blind leaders of the blind" Jesus went on further to exhibit in three trenchant parables, "The Two Sons," "The Wicked Vinedressers" and "The Marriage Feast." He adopted his characteristic method of compelling them to see their glaring sin in order most effectively to warn them against the fatal sin of rejecting God's final message. They were like the disobedient son who paid only lip service to his father, the wicked vinedressers who killed their master's son when he came to demand only his father's just dues, and the invited guests who rudely disregarded the invitation and ill-treated the messengers. The comparison was obvious. By their rejection of God's message they were shutting themselves out of the Kingdom.

Vicious attempts were now made by the various parties to discredit Jesus in the eyes of the people by putting questions to him which he could not answer, or if he should answer would lead him into conflict with the Law of Moses, or with the Roman authorities. All of these captious questions he used, with consummate skill, to make still clearer the principles of his spiritual Kingdom.

The belief of the Sadducees that there is no "spirit" and that, therefore, man does not live after death, which they endeavored to support by their question about the much-married woman, intimating that the pharisaic

theory of the resurrection would involve polyandry in the world to come, he answered by repudiating the pharisaic theory that the future life is simply the present physically conditioned life somewhat glorified, and still more fundamentally by an appeal to the depth of God's love for men which could not suffer his beloved to perish. He reminded them of the vital message they had long since forgotten, that "God is not the God of dead people, but of living." The scribe's question about "the greatest commandment" gave him the opportunity to point out the real, guiding principle of God's government, the summation of "all the Law and the Prophets" —love, which means toward God reverence and glad obedience, and toward men concern for their well-being equally with our own.

As has been indicated, the purpose of their questions was to discredit Jesus in the eyes of the people by getting him to entangle himself in his answers. The shrewdest question, however, was that of the Herodians: "Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not?" If he answered with a categorical affirmative he would offend the people, and if he answered negatively the Herodians would at once accuse him of treason before the Roman authorities. By his famous answer, "Give Caesar what belongs to Caesar, give God what belongs to God," he not only confounded his captious questioners but enunciated the far-reaching positive principle that payment of real debts to one's fellow-men —especially payment for the support of government —in no way conflicts with or takes the place of fulfilment of his obligations to God.

When he had silenced all parties and "no one ventured to put any more questions to him," Jesus turned upon

them with the most severe denunciations that were ever uttered by any prophet or reformer. While the "seven woes" reported by the First Gospel may include utterances delivered on other occasions, according to this author's custom, they, no doubt, express the culmination of his indignation against the "scribes and Pharisees" as the most guilty of all Israel's leaders. They had risen above the selfish materialism of the Sadducees, and because of their greater enlightenment and their professed devotion to God's service they should have given a more attentive ear to the principles of the Kingdom.

Against these "blind guides" who had proved false to the ideals of the Kingdom, Jesus directed his intense denunciation of their hollow pretense of righteousness. The sixth woe is typical: "Woe to you," he cried, "you irreligious scribes and Pharisees! You are like tombs whitewashed; they look comely on the outside, but inside they are full of dead men's bones and all manner of impurity. So to men you seem just, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and iniquity."

3. THE PLOT AND PREPARATION

The two great religious-political parties now united against Jesus, recognizing him as a common enemy. The Pharisees had opposed him from the beginning because of his teaching, which was uncompromisingly antagonistic to theirs. The Sadducees or priestly aristocratic party he had now offended by his action in cleansing the Temple of its merchandising, and so interfering with one of the chief sources of their gains.

These two parties now made common cause with the Herodians and formed a plot to get hold of him when he should be away from the people. They were afraid to

arrest him publicly for "that would mean a popular riot." Jesus was well aware of their enmity and knew it would be dangerous to permit them to get in touch with him when away from the people. Accordingly, every evening after teaching in the Temple all day, he went with his disciples across the Kidron Valley to the Mount of Olives and spent the night in seclusion at an olive orchard called Gethsemane, probably the home of a friend.

While Jesus' discerning eye had no doubt long before this seen that one of his disciples was dissatisfied and disloyal, his unconquerable optimism and faith in human nature kept alive the hope that he would heed his warnings and get a sufficient grasp of the principles of the Kingdom to keep him with the others on the narrow path of duty and honor. No doubt also Judas had some good traits of character that led to his selection as one of Jesus' special band of disciples. If the tradition that he was treasurer of the disciples is trustworthy, it indicates the recognition of some business ability. There must have been at times large sums of money to be handled, for Jesus' company of followers sometimes probably numbered hundreds. The money for their support was contributed by wealthy women whom he had healed like "Mary Magdalene, Joanna the wife of Chuza, the steward of Herod, Susanna, and a number of others, who ministered to him out of their means."

Judas was evidently ambitious and fond of money. He had followed Jesus, thinking that he was going to be a king, and expecting to be made "Lord High Treasurer," as the sons of Zebedee hoped also to have still higher offices. He undoubtedly felt aggrieved at Jesus' refusal to accept the overtures of those who wanted to make

him a king, and now after following him to Jerusalem in the hope that at last he would declare himself and set up the Kingdom, he was bitterly disappointed at what he thought to be Jesus' supreme folly in condemning and completely alienating the religious and political leaders. He probably determined to force his hand, to compel him to use his power in order to deliver himself from his enemies, and so to take his rightful position as the Messiah. In the event of failure, which would disprove his claims, Judas may have felt that he would have the satisfaction of revenge for the imposition practiced upon him.

His final decision may have been reached at a supper given to Jesus and his disciples "in the house of Simon the leper" at Bethany, when his friend Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus, "came up with an alabaster flask of pure nard perfume, which had cost a great sum" —three hundred days' wages of a laborer, or about a thousand dollars' purchasing power in our money at the present time. "She broke the flask and poured the perfume over his head." This was probably her declaration of his messiahship. She was annointing him king over Israel. Some of the disciples were indignant. "What is the use of wasting perfume like this," they said, "why not sell it and give to the poor?" But Jesus said: "Let her alone, why are you annoying her? She has done what she could—she has anticipated the perfuming of my body for burial." The earliest gospel goes on to say: "Then Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went to the high priests to betray him to them. They were delighted to hear it and promised to pay him for it. Meantime he sought a good opportunity for betraying him."

Jesus now had to take precautions to prevent his betrayal before he had an opportunity to have a final conference with his disciples, so he took care to select a room for their last meal without the knowledge of Judas. "Accordingly he sent two of his disciples, telling them: "Go into the city and you will meet a man carrying a water-jar; follow him, and whatever house he goes into, tell the owner that the Teacher says, 'Where is my room, where I may eat with my disciples?'" The question of the disciples shows that he had not disclosed to them the place of meeting, and the question put to the owner of the house, "Where is *my* room?" indicates that he had made previous arrangements for the use of the room. The carrying of a jar of water by a man, a task usually done by a woman, was probably the sign agreed upon for recognizing the house. It was probably, as tradition claims, the home of John Mark, which we find was used as a meeting-place by the disciples after the Crucifixion. This would explain the fulness of detail at this point in the narrative.

In this house in the "large room upstairs" Jesus and his disciples assembled. Judas was present, and from Jesus' warning it would appear that he still had hopes that he might repent of his evil purpose. The oldest account of this Last Supper is given by Paul in his First Letter to the Corinthians, who lays the emphasis on its memorial aspect:

> Jesus took a loaf and after thanking God he broke it saying, "This means my body, broken for you; do this in memory of me." In the same way he took the cup after supper saying, "This cup means the new covenant ratified by my blood; as often as you drink it, do it in memory of me."

He felt sure that this would be the last time he would eat with his little band of faithful followers, and he took the opportunity by this acted parable to point out to them the significance of his death in such a way that they would remember it afterward.

When he spoke of the wine as representing his "covenant-blood shed for many" he intended that they should understand that his death would help to bring God and man together, for the disciples would take the word "covenant" in the Old Testament sense of a solemn pledge of relationship between God and man ratified by shedding the blood of a sacrificial victim. It was natural that he should express the desire to be remembered when they should meet again after his death around the table. It was a natural expression of the loyalty of the early Christians that they should make the observance of this Supper a perpetual memorial of the friendship, teaching, and self-sacrifice of their great teacher. This whole narrative implies that Jesus now looked upon his death as inevitable.

4. THE ARREST

After the supper and a conference with his disciples in which he gave them farewell encouragement and admonitions, the little party went out through the Kidron Valley to the Hill of Olives where they had spent the nights since coming to Jerusalem. Judas left them probably as soon as he learned that they would pass the night at the usual place. When Jesus noticed his absence he would know that the attempt to seize him might soon be expected. He could now have escaped if he had so desired but he went on with his disciples

to Gethsemane, and there occurred the noted scene of anguish in view of the coming catastrophe.

Jesus evidently had a human dread and shrinking from death and craving for human sympathy. No doubt the rejection of his message by his people was more bitter than even the anticipation of the physical suffering. As in all previous crises of his life, so now in this final crisis he sought and found strength in communion with his Father. As in the wilderness after his call, and across the lake in the "lonely spot" after the multitudes had tried to make him a king, and on the Mountain of Transfiguration near Caesarea Philippi after his rejection by the people of Galilee, so now in the garden of Gethsemane, facing the immediate imminence of the final tragedy, he wrestled with the temptation to save his life at the expense of his mission—wrestled and conquered. With the conviction that "the cup" would not be taken away came complete submission to his Father's will.

Judas, who had slipped away and gone to the chief priests to reveal the hiding place of his master, now came through the night, guiding a number of Temple guards and servants of the high priest. He pointed out Jesus by kissing him, a form of greeting almost as common as our handshake. "Then they laid hands on him and seized him." He made no resistance, and, as he had anticipated, his disciples "forsook him and fled, all of them."

The naïve reference to the "young man" who "followed him with only a linen sheet thrown around his body, but when the men seized him he fled away naked leaving the sheet behind him," in all probability

refers to the author of our earliest narrative, John Mark himself. He had probably become much interested in the wonderful teacher, and on this night his curiosity had been aroused and he had followed the disciples to the hiding place. With the natural impulsiveness of youth, he followed the crowd when the disciples fled, and when one of the arresting party grabbed at him he escaped by sacrificing his hastily donned attire.

5. THE TRIAL

Jesus was first hurried to the house of the high priest, who seems to have been the leader of the conspirators because of the fact that he was chiefly concerned in the policy of extortion and hypocrisy which the bold Nazarene had so scathingly condemned. Here in the courtyard Jesus was held a prisoner until morning, and given a preliminary, informal examination before some members of the Sanhedrin hastily got together in order to find some evidence against him in preparation for a formal trial before the Sanhedrin after sunrise, which was as soon as it could legally meet.

At this private examination, which was illegal according to the rabbinical code, as no charge had been preferred, an attempt was made to get Jesus to incriminate himself, but he refused to give testimony. His answer when questioned about his teaching: "I have spoken openly to the world; I have always taught in the synagogue and in the Temple where all Jews gather; I have said nothing in secret. Why ask me? Ask my hearers what I have said to them; they know what I said"—was a demand for witnesses in accordance with the regular legal procedure of the Jews.

At dawn a hurried session of the Sanhedrin was held and efforts made to procure evidence against him, with the twofold purpose of condemning him in the Sanhedrin and of securing an indictment on charges that would be recognized by the Roman authorities. In order to secure an indictment, according to Jewish legal procedure, the testimony of the two witnesses must agree. If there was not agreement in every particular the prisoner must be discharged. As the conspirators failed to produce this concurrent testimony of two witnesses Jesus should now have been released, but instead of releasing him the high priest tried to make him testify against himself, a practice as illegal in the Jewish courts of that time as it is in ours today.

They asked him if he were the Messiah (king) in order to catch him for accusation before the Roman authorities. His answer was characteristic of his answers before: "If I tell you, you will not believe and if I ask you, you will not answer." He thus recognized the impassable gulf between his conception of the Messiah and theirs. He then went on to express his conviction that God would vindicate him. "After this," he said, "the Son of man will be seated at God's right hand of power." At this they asked him if he were the Son of God. His answer—"You say that I am"—was non-committal, simply passing the question back to them as if we should say: "It is you who are saying it, not I," but his refusal to deny they took for assent because of their anxiety to get him to incriminate himself, and accordingly condemned him on the charge of blasphemy.

As the Sanhedrin did not have authority to impose the death penalty they then brought him before Pilate,

the Roman governor, on the charge of treason in the three counts that he was a political agitator, that he tried to prevent the people from paying tribute to Rome, and that he claimed to be king himself. "We have discovered this fellow," they said, "perverting our nation, forbidding tribute being paid to Caesar and alleging that he himself is Christ, a king." These charges were presented in this form because they knew that the Romans would not recognize blasphemy as a crime. Pilate saw through their fanaticism but had to give them audience in order to pacify them. His position as governor of Judea was not easy. He no doubt felt that if he gave occasion for a Jewish rebellion he would be recalled. After questioning Jesus he concluded that there was nothing but fanaticism in the charges, and decided to release him.

The chief priests, however, had stirred up the people to insist on condemnation. The fickle mob turned against the "Messiah" who could not defend himself against the Romans, and

> They shouted one and all, "Away with him!" Again Pilate addressed them for he wanted to release Jesus, but they roared, "To the cross, to the cross with him!" "But what crime has he committed? I have found nothing about him that deserves death; so I will release him with a scourging." But they loudly urged their demand that he should be crucified and their shouts carried the day—Pilate gave sentence that their demand was to be carried out.

6. THE EXECUTION

The Roman cross consisted of two pieces of timber, one about 8 feet long fixed upright in the ground as a post, the other a rough cross-bar hung or set in a socket on or near the top of the post. The post remained

permanently fixed in the ground for constant use, as in the case of the modern gallows. The victim was usually compelled to carry the heavy cross-bar to which sometimes his arms were bound to the place of execution where his hands were nailed to it and it was then hoisted up and hung to the post.

Jesus' exhausted physical condition is seen from the fact that he was unable to carry the heavy piece of timber, and that "they forced Simon, a Cyrenian, who was passing on his way from the country (the father of Alexander and Rufus) to carry his cross." Evidently Alexander and Rufus were disciples living at the time when our earliest gospel was written, and this reference is due to the forced participation of their father, Simon, in the dreadful tragedy. This incident gives a vivid touch of realism to the scene.

The account of the death of Jesus lacks the detail that is characteristic of the preceding events in this week of tragedy. This is what might be expected from the fact that all his disciples had fled. Only a few of the faithful women who had followed him from Galilee watched the scene from a safe distance It is not likely that Simon of Cyrene stayed by after carrying his forced burden to the place of execution, as he would be afraid of further indignity. Afterward when he was converted to Christianity it would be his proud boast that he had carried the cross of his Master. It was customary to give the victim a narcotic drink, "wine mixed with bitters," provided by the wealthy women of Jerusalem, to deaden consciousness before crucifixion. It was characteristic of Jesus that he refused this drink as he no doubt wished to preserve his mind unclouded to the last, and, if it

must be done, to drink to the dregs the cup of suffering the Father had not thought it best to remove.

The victim, according to Roman custom, wore suspended from his neck on his way to the place of crucifixion a tablet upon which was inscribed the name of his crime. This tablet was fixed above his body on the cross. In the case of Jesus this inscription was "The King of the Jews." This shows that he was condemned by the Roman authorities on the charge that he was a political agitator, who claimed to be a king as his accusers had alleged. This tablet, the carrying of the heavy timber of the cross, the crucifixion in company with two highwaymen, all testify to the fact that Jesus' execution was that of the common criminal of the lowest class. This horrible death employed by Roman cruelty for slaves and the lowest criminals undoubtedly had the immediate effect of overwhelming the disciples with shame and confusion. To the Jewish mind crucifixion was the most terrible symbol of the curse of God.

Jesus was nailed to the cross about nine o'clock in the morning and endured the awful agony until about three in the afternoon. Usually the victim hung on the cross for several days. Jesus' death in such a comparatively brief time was probably caused by the agonizing experiences through which he had previously passed. The scourging itself with leathern thongs loaded with lead and iron sometimes produced death. His "loud cry" in Aramaic: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" uttered just before his death may have been heard by the women or reported to the disciples afterward by "some of the bystanders."

These words expressing an idea so foreign to later Christian belief bear the genuine stamp of historical trustworthiness. It is natural that at such a time he should use words learned in childhood. While they show that he still maintained his unswerving faith in the Father, they give some idea of his terrible agony and the sense of loneliness that came to him with the conviction that he would not deliver him from death. Even to this time he had not given up hope that the Kingdom might be established without this supreme sacrifice. The "loud cry" with which he expired indicates that he died of "a broken heart"—the mental agony of a great spirit at the realization of the complete rejection of his ideal for his people—his life-message, "The Kingdom of God."

Even in his death Jesus gave evidence of his wonderful power to attach people to him. "There were some women watching from a distance, among them Mary of Magdala, Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses, and Salome, women who had followed him from Galilee and waited on him, besides a number of other women who had accompanied him to Jerusalem." It is to be noted that James the younger and Joses are referred to as being disciples living at the time the author wrote his narrative. "Even a member of the Sanhedrin, Joseph of Arimathea, a counsellor of good position," who had no doubt been a sympathetic listener to Jesus' words about the Kingdom, had the courage to ask for the body and give it burial in his private rock-hewed tomb. The faithful women did not give up their heart-rending watch until the lacerated body was laid to rest. "Mary of Magdala and Mary the mother of Joses noted where he was laid."

SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS

1. Burton and Mathews, *Life of Christ*, pp. 219–72.
2. Kent, *Life and Teaching of Jesus*, pp. 250–97.
3. Robinson, *St. Mark's Life of Jesus*, pp. 98–129.
4. Rhees, *Life of Jesus of Nazareth*, pp. 167–200.
5. Barton, *Jesus of Nazareth*, pp. 316–89.
6. Weiss, *Life of Christ*, III, 273–372.
7. Farrar, *Life of Christ*, chaps. liv, lx, lxi.
8. Holtzmann, *Life of Jesus*, pp. 392–491.

CHAPTER VII

THE NEW BEGINNING

HOW THE DISCIPLES MET THE SITUATION CONFRONTING THEM AFTER THE DEATH OF JESUS

1. The Flight into Galilee
   Mark 14:27, 28, 50; 15:40–47; 16:7; Matt. 26:31, 32, 56; 28:16–20; cf. John, chap. 21
2. The Conviction of Resurrection
   I Cor. 15:1–8; Gal. 1:16; Mark 16:1–8; Luke 24:34; Acts 1:3
3. The Return to Jesusalem
   Acts 1:4, 8–14; 2:1–21, 46; cf. Luke 24:53
4. The First Community
   Acts 1:15, 23–25; 2:41–47; 4:23–37; 5:12–16

1. THE FLIGHT INTO GALILEE

"Then they left him and fled, all of them." These brief words from the oldest gospel tell the pathetic tale of Jesus' desertion by his most favored followers. This statement is enforced by the report of his warning at the close of the Last Supper: "You will all stumble and fall away, for it is written: 'I will strike at the Shepherd and the sheep will be scattered.'" In spite of whatever warnings he may have given them of what they might expect in Jerusalem, his arrest and Crucifixion were a terrible "stumbling block," and for a brief time at least they lost faith and hope. They were completely stunned by the direful calamity that had befallen their beloved Master, and their only coherent thought was evidently to seek safety in immediate flight.

If any evidence is needed beyond the simple graphic statement mentioned, it may be found in the fact that his burial was left to a stranger. The disciples evidently did not have the courage to take care of his body even if they had lingered on the outskirts of the crowd until the fatal issue. This failure of the disciples is most significant when we understand the attitude of the people of the time toward the burial of the dead.

The obligation of burial was exceedingly binding among the Jews. The worst fate that could befall a Jew was to be denied burial in the tombs of his fathers. When one wanted to utter the bitterest curse upon his enemy he would say, as did Goliath to David: "I will give your body to the birds of the heavens and to the beasts of the field." David could think of nothing worse, so he replied: "I will give the dead bodies of the host of Philistines to the birds of the heavens and the wild beasts of the earth." When a Jew spoke of his death he invariably mentioned his burial and made provision for it. The disciples of John the Baptist, although their master had been put to death by a public executioner at the command of the king, "went and got his body and laid it in a tomb."

In view of this attitude toward burial, the disciples of Jesus must have been utterly terrified and confounded, or they would have performed the last sacred rites for their Master. The terrible and disgraceful death by crucifixion undoubtedly completely stunned their faith. They had expected that God would deliver their Master out of the hands of his enemies, but God had deserted him. Then he certainly could not have been the Messiah, the Son of God, as he claimed. There was

nothing for them to do but to get out of danger as soon as possible, to flee from the place where all their hopes had been so terribly shattered.

The later gospels, giving devout expression to several views of the nature of the Resurrection, current when they were written, relate appearances of Jesus in Jerusalem. These appearances seem to be assigned to the first Sunday after the Crucifixion, but a comparison of the last chapter of Luke's Gospel with the first fourteen verses of his second treatise, the Acts of the Apostles, indicates that they belong to a later period, probably toward the close of the "forty days" to which he refers. However these appearances may be accounted for, the oldest gospel records imply a very early departure of the principal disciples to Galilee.

The conclusion of the Gospel of Mark—our earliest source—has been lost, but before the break there is an intimation that the disciples went immediately to Galilee, and the First Gospel, which used this source as a basis, after giving the account of the visit of the women to the tomb, makes this statement: "Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee," and places here the only appearance of Jesus to them after the Crucifixion. A fragment of the Gospel of Peter recently discovered speaks of Peter as having returned to Galilee after the Crucifixion and having resumed fishing with Andrew and Levi, son of Alpheus, and this is confirmed by an account preserved in the Fourth Gospel. This was the natural thing for the disciples to do when they came to the conclusion that it was all over—all their hopes and dreams of the messianic Kingdom. They were not accustomed to the city. They had come only for the Passover. It was a

dangerous place. There was nothing else to do but to get back to the home country and take up the old routine of life again.

2. THE CONVICTION OF RESURRECTION

Here in Galilee in all probability occurred the appearances of Jesus to his disciples that are enumerated by Paul, who gives the earliest account that has come to us. Writing to the Corinthians, about twenty-five years after the Crucifixion he says:

> First and foremost, I passed on to you what I myself received, namely, that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, that he was buried, that he rose on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter, then to the Twelve; after that he appeared to over five hundred brothers all at once, the majority of whom survive to this day, though some have died; after that, he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and finally he appeared to myself, this so-called "abortion" of an apostle.

Whatever one may think of the nature of the Resurrection, of the facts there can be no doubt. Nothing but an experience which gave them an unquestionable conviction that they had seen their Master alive can account for the extraordinary change that came over the disciples within a few days after the Crucifixion. These men who fled precipitately, who were so terrified that they left the burial of their Master to a stranger, who so completely lost faith and hope as to go back to the old life and ordinary occupations of the days before they heard the thrilling message of the coming of the Kingdom and the King, these men whose very leader, the impetuous Peter, denied that he had ever seen the Nazarene—a few days afterward under that same leadership, not

following with fear and trembling as before, not scattered as sheep without a shepherd, but with absolute faith and fearlessness in the presence of the political and religious conspirators who had caused their Master's death, ready to die if need be for his cause, confidently proclaimed him as the Messiah in face of the fact that he had suffered death on that very charge.

The cause of this marvelous transformation is by no means uncertain. It was proclaimed by them in every utterance and in every situation. It was the absolute, unswerving conviction that their Master was alive, that death had not been able to hold him, that he was still their leader. But with this conviction came an additional item of faith which was all-important for a new religion. If God had delivered him from death, then he must be what he claimed, the Messiah. His Resurrection was regarded by them as an absolute demonstration of this potent fact. Nothing could ever again shake their faith.

It was natural that Peter should be the first to have this glad consciousness of his Master's presence, as is indicated in Paul's definite statement, and that he should recite his experience to the Twelve and that they should be the next to be convinced. It was natural, too, that these appearances should have been in Galilee in the midst of the scenes of his greatest activity, where he had walked and talked with his disciples, and warned them of what might be expected to happen in Jerusalem, and tried to prepare them to keep their faith even in the time of the extreme tragedy by the confident assurance that he would ultimately triumph. Here they recalled his words of confidence that, although he might suffer

and die, he would still triumph and complete his messianic mission, and their panic of distrust and despair changed to faith and intense expectation.

In the Fourth Gospel is preserved a beautiful picture of Peter's awakening from his brief period of distrust and despair. Long before daybreak, with his two closest friends, James and John, and several other disciples, he put out from the familiar shore in the boat, in which so often Jesus had been the chief passenger, and fished in the familiar waters of the Lake of Galilee. There, in the stillness of the night, undisturbed even by any success in catching fish, his mind naturally reverted to his lost Master who so often had sat in the boat and talked so wonderfully of the messianic Kingdom. He remembered his confidence in his mission and its ultimate triumph. Surely it could not be true that death could hold him, that his glorious mission had ended in failure. Now dawn was breaking and he remembered how the Great Teacher had prepared breakfast for his hungry followers at just such a time and in such a place. His faith returned. "Jesus was standing on the beach!"

The impetuous disciple jumped from the boat and waded to the shore to meet his Master, and heard the beloved accents of his voice: "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than the others do?" "Why, Lord, you know I love you," came the quick response from his heart. Again the words of his Master: "Then feed my sheep." Three times came the searching question, three times the answer of faith, three times the commission. Yes, he realized that he loved more than the others and he answered the call to leadership. Never from that time, in whatever danger or stress, did he doubt that he

had seen his Master risen from the dead, and that conviction his enthusiasm imparted to the others, and they too regained their faith. Again and again they "saw the Lord." He had "risen as he said." This conviction soon spread to other disciples, and on one occasion as many as 500 of them at once were gathered together and were convinced that Jesus stood in their midst.

For this belief the disciples were not unprepared. Belief in the resurrection of exceptionally great prophets and leaders highly favored by God, like Enoch, Moses, and Elijah, was current among the Jews of this time. Our earliest gospel tells us that when "the name of Jesus had become well known, people said, 'John the Baptizer has risen from the dead; that is why miraculous powers are working through him'; others said, 'It is Elijah,' others again, 'It is a prophet, like one of the old prophets.' But when Herod heard of it he said, 'John has risen, John, whom I beheaded.'" After Jesus' resurrection the disciples began to search the writings of the prophets and soon became convinced that the resurrection of the Messiah was "according to the Scriptures" and so their faith in his messiahship was confirmed in the strongest manner. "This Jesus," their spokesman is represented as saying later, "God raised from the dead, as we can all bear witness. . . . . Therefore let all the house of Israel understand beyond a doubt that God has made him both Lord and Messiah."

3. THE RETURN TO JERUSALEM

"The Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his Temple, even the messenger of the covenant in whom

you delight." "Day after day they resorted with one accord to the Temple and broke bread together in their own homes." In these two texts, the first from the ancient prophecy of Malachi, the second from the account in Acts, of the doings of the disciples after the Resurrection, is found the answer to the apparently perplexing problem why the disciples so soon returned to Jerusalem. The fact that God had raised Jesus from the dead was to them indubitable proof that he was the Messiah, and as such they believed in accordance with the current apocalyptic writings that he would immediately return in glory to Jerusalem to the Temple and set up his Kingdom with spectacular and miraculous demonstration. Of course, they must be there to share his glory and receive their appointments.

This belief explains the statement in Acts that in those first days they "resorted daily with one accord to the Temple." They expected the immediate return of their Master as the glorified Messiah and believed that he would come directly to the Temple. The fact that "Mary, the mother of Jesus, with his brothers was with them" is confirmatory of Paul's statement, when, after mentioning Jesus' appearance to Peter and then to the Twelve and to the 500 brethren, he says: "After that he appeared to James." These appearances, as has been intimated, were in all probability in Galilee and that to James probably led to the conversion of his brothers who do not appear to have believed in his mission during his ministry. The whole family probably was now converted and accompanied the other disciples to Jerusalem.

A new beginning of messianic consciousness and the nucleus of the future church was established when soon

after their return to Jerusalem Peter called a meeting "of about a hundred and twenty persons all together" to select a successor to Judas in order that the symbolic number of twelve adopted by Jesus might remain intact. This is significant as indicating the idea of these earliest disciples that they composed the "remnant" that had remained true to Israel's high calling. They constituted the true Israel and consequently the Twelve were representatives of the twelve tribes. Israel as a nation had forsaken Jehovah and could not claim his promises, but the prophets claimed that by virtue of a "remnant" that had kept themselves from the general corruption, Israel was still God's people. This "remnant," though few, constituted the true Israel age after age. The disciples now believed that they were this remnant, and so the true Israel and the nucleus of the messianic Kingdom which would be set up when Jesus would return in glory For this reason the symbolic number twelve must be kept intact.

The chief reason for the renewed faith and courage of the disciples has been mentioned. They were absolutely convinced that Jesus was alive—that he had been raised from the dead, and had been exalted to the right hand of God -and they were expecting confidently that he would immediately return to begin his glorified reign as Messiah. But there was another reason for their confidence and joyfulness. This was the conviction that the Spirit of God was with them. The ancient prophets of Israel had possessed this Spirit. God had given it to them as his representatives, specially set aside in the midst of a "perverse nation" to be his servants and the exponents of his will. They had foretold the coming of

a blessed age—the messianic Kingdom—when Israel would be in reality a holy nation, and the Spirit would be bestowed upon all the people as now upon the prophets. For example, Peter quotes from the prophet Joel as follows:

> In the last days, saith God,
> I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh,
> Your sons and daughters shall prophesy,
> Your young men shall see visions,
> Your old men shall dream dreams;
> On my very slaves and slave girls will I pour
> out my Spirit
> And they shall prophesy.

The disciples now believed this age had come, that they were the new Israel, and that the Spirit was given to each one of them. They had the consciousness of the presence of the Spirit in their midst, the conviction that God's message was in their hearts, and that they had direct communion with him. This is what gave them such confidence in the presence of all opposition.

This conviction came to them in an especial manner when "they were all together," probably in John Mark's home, on the Jewish festival of Pentecost, fifty days after the Passover. This was probably the occasion when they first became conscious of the peculiar manifestation called in the New Testament "speaking with tongues." They were filled with such irrepressible confidence and joy that one after another, and then all together, they began to break forth in ecstatic utterance, which they recognized as the voice of the Spirit with which they were filled. The author of Acts, in accordance with his custom, makes this occasion symbolic of the universality of Christianity. He is about to tell the story of how

Christianity was carried into all lands of the Empire, and uses this striking incident, when the disciples first experienced the strange phenomenon of speaking with tongues, as a symbol of what followed. He may also have had in mind a parallelism between this beginning of the church and the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai, when, according to Jewish belief, God's voice was heard in seventy different dialects.

The nature of this "speaking with tongues" is best determined from Paul's references to it in his letters, especially the fourteenth chapter of his First Letter to the Corinthians. It was not intelligible. "He who speaks in a 'tongue,'" says Paul, "addresses God, not men; no one understands him; he is talking of divine secrets in the Spirit—if at a gathering of the whole Church everybody speaks with tongues and if outsiders or unbelievers come in, will they not say you are insane?" So also in the account in Acts some of the onlookers said: "They are full of new wine," and Peter explained the phenomenon by saying when he began his address: "These men are not drunk as you imagine. Why, it is only nine o'clock in the morning. No, this is what was predicted by the prophet Joel: 'In the last days saith God, I will pour forth my Spirit upon all flesh.'"

The feast of Pentecost, corresponding to our Thanksgiving, a time of joyfulness, was a natural time for such an outburst of enthusiasm. The disciples were "all gathered together in one place," no doubt to give united thanks for the joyous assurance of their Master's glorious deliverance from death and exaltation to power. There came to them a complete and intense reaction from the terrible period of dejection that had come with his

Crucifixion. Their feelings of hope, assurance, and confident expectation were released in a flood of joyous, ecstatic utterance so spontaneous, so sudden, that the sound seemed to fill the room "like a violent blast of wind." They were filled with such courage and enthusiasm that, led by Peter, they began the first public declaration of the great message. A large number joined them on this day and the first community of disciples was thus formed. What Jesus had failed to accomplish during his life was now a reality, a community of followers, the nucleus of the Great Church of ages to come.

4. THE FIRST COMMUNITY

This first community of disciples did not at first think of establishing a new religion. They were still Jews and kept up Jewish worship and ceremonials, meeting daily in the Temple and expecting the return of Jesus to inaugurate the new messianic era. They themselves were the faithful "remnant," the true Israel, the nucleus of the Kingdom. When the Messiah should return, the nation as a whole should be sifted, the repentant taken into the Kingdom, "saved from this crooked generation," the wicked destroyed. Jesus was the Jewish Messiah; all other peoples must come into Judaism for messianic deliverance.

As Jesus' return was delayed they gradually came to the conclusion that it was their task to prepare their countrymen for his return by a message of repentance such as John and Jesus had used. Their message may be inferred from the account of Peter's speeches given in the second and third chapters of Acts. What was new

to Jewish ears centered around the person of Jesus as Messiah and Lord:

> Jesus the Nazarene, a man accredited to you by God through mighty works, wonders, and signs, you crucified according to prophecy. This Jesus God raised from the dead, as we can all bear witness, and has made him both Lord and Christ. Uplifted by God's right hand and having received from the Father the long-promised holy Spirit, he has poured on us what you now see and hear. Repent then, and turn to have your sins blotted out, so that a breathing space may be vouchsafed you, and that the Lord may send Jesus, your long-delayed Christ, who must be kept in Heaven till all things be restored.

These words, taken from Peter's speeches in the second and third chapters of Acts, follow two parallel lines of argument and evidence deduced from the Old Testament Scriptures and the experience of the disciples. This is an epitome of the faith and message of the early disciples. The points may be itemized as follows:

1. Jesus the Nazarene who was crucified is alive. God raised him from the dead.
2. This Resurrection is a proof of his messiahship.
3. His death was in fulfilment of God's purpose, in accordance with prophecy, and so in no sense a defeat.
4. He will come again in glory as the Messiah and establish his Kingdom. Repent, therefore, and prepare for his coming.
5. Those who repent will receive forgiveness and the gift of the Spirit.
6. The ecstatic speaking with tongues which you now see and hear is the express manifestation of the Spirit sent by Jesus from heaven upon his faithful disciples.
7. This Spirit has long been expected. This present manifestation is in accordance with the prophecy of Joel and is a further proof of Jesus' messiahship.

It will be seen that the two great cardinal points in this faith and message are personal devotion and loyalty

to Jesus and confidence in the presence of the Spirit which he had sent. These two facts explain everything in the conduct of this early community. They felt that he now dominated their lives and prescribed their whole activity. In a stricter sense than before his Crucifixion he was their Master. For this reason they called him Lord, and their first task as annunciated by Peter was to "let all the house of Israel understand beyond a doubt that God has made him both Lord and Christ." Their personal acquaintance with Jesus and their inspiration with his message was what distinguished them from other sects of Judaism. It was their personal loyalty to Jesus that transformed the rigid monotheism of Judaism into a confident trust in a living, heavenly Father.

This personal loyalty and devotion to Jesus drew them together into the closest personal fellowship in which the only interest was that of the intense expectation of the return of Jesus to establish the Kingdom. With this in view, "all these men resorted with one mind to prayer," and when many others joined them after the special manifestation of the Spirit's presence on Pentecost,

> They devoted themselves to the instruction given by the apostles and to fellowship, breaking bread and praying together. Awe fell on everyone and many signs and wonders were performed by the apostles. The believers all kept together; they shared all they had with one another, they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds among all, as anyone might be in need. Day after day they resorted with one accord to the Temple and broke bread together in their homes. They ate bread with a glad and simple heart, praising God and looked on with favor by all the people.

Here we have a graphic picture of the life of this early community. They kept constantly together and prayed

continually, no doubt, for the return of their Master as the glorified Messiah. They spent most of the time in the Temple, expecting that he would make his first appearance there according to prophecy. Daily from house to house they met in groups for a common meal, which they observed in special memory of their Master and which they called the Lord's Supper. As they expected his return in a very short time they did not concern themselves about the ordinary affairs of life, and those who had money or possessions contributed to the common welfare.

The conduct of this community, however, was not pure communism, a pooling of all their possessions, as might be inferred from the account given in Acts. Mark's mother evidently kept her house in Jerusalem. The case of Barnabas is cited as worthy of special mention because "he sold a farm belonging to him and brought the money which he placed before the feet of the apostles." This instance seems to have been singled out because he gave the whole price of the farm to the common cause, and there is no intimation that this farm included all of his possessions.

The story of Ananias and Sapphira indicates clearly that their guilt did not consist in keeping back part of the price of the property which they had sold, but in misrepresentation, pretending to give all in order to get the credit of special generosity, while secretly keeping back a part. "Tell me," said Peter to Sapphira, evidently in order to give her a chance to clear herself of the guilt, "did you sell the land for only so much?" "Yes," she said, "that was all we sold it for." His words to Ananias show clearly that he was under no obligation

to give all or indeed any of the property or money. "When it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And even after the sale was the money not yours to do as you pleased with it?" What looks like communism was an intense devotion to the common cause that led many to devote to it a part or all of their wealth. This was done more freely on account of the belief that the Messiah's coming was very near.

The difficulty sometimes experienced of understanding the life of this earliest community of disciples arises mainly from a failure to recognize the second fact mentioned above as a determining element in the faith and life of the disciples, that they felt themselves to be directly under the influence of the Spirit. Not only did each member of the community have this "gift of the Spirit" but it was the common possession of the community, which consequently might be said to be spirit-governed. In the old Israel the Spirit was granted only to a chosen few and to these only at intervals, but in the new Israel this gift was bestowed upon each member. New members were initiated by the rite of baptism "into the name," that is to say, into the domain or sphere of influence of the name of Jesus.

There was no regular organization at first, and no specially appointed leaders, because no organization or government was necessary by reason of the fact that the gift of the Spirit was bestowed upon all and all were guided by the Spirit. There was no set form of worship because each disciple spoke or prayed only under the influence of the Spirit, and no one had any right to control such expression or activity. Peter's prominence was caused no doubt by his having been the leader among the

disciples during Jesus' ministry, by his having been the first to become convinced of the appearance of the "risen Lord," and by his zeal in spreading that conviction. The Twelve, because of the close association with Jesus all through his ministry and their consequent familiarity with his words, were recognized as the natural teachers of the others who had been less favored. So it is said that the new members "devoted themselves to the instruction given by the apostles."

When the numbers increased and there arose complaint that some "were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food," "the Twelve summoned the main body of the disciples" and advised that some men be chosen to look after this matter. The choosing was done by "the whole body," and the men chosen were some who were specially distinguished by evidence of having the Spirit in greater measure than the others. This was the beginning of organization. It was a gradual growth as necessity arose, and especially as the vividness of the expectation of the Lord's immediate coming was lessened by its delay and the evidence of the Spirit's guidance was not so noticeable in the rank and file of the growing community.

SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS

1. Scott, *The Beginnings of the Church*, pp. 1–108.
2. McGiffert, *A History of Christianity in the Apostolic Age*, pp. 36–81.
3. Kent, *The Life and Teachings of Jesus*, pp. 298–310.
4. Kent, *The Work and Teachings of the Apostles*, pp. 21–51.
5. Farrar, *Life of Christ*, chap. lxii.
6. Dobschütz, *The Apostolic Age*, pp. 1–28.
7. Bartlet, *The Apostolic Age*, pp. 1–18.
8. Pfleiderer, *Primitive Christianity*, I, 1–32.

CHAPTER VIII

THE NEW ARENA

FROM JUDAISM TO CHRISTIANITY

1. The First Community and Judaism
   Acts 2:36–47; 3:1, 11–26; 4:1–22; 5:12, 17–42; 7:1–53; 10:14; 11:1–18; 21:21–26
2. Conflict with Judaism
   Acts 6:8–15; 7:25—8:3; 9:1, 2; 22:4; 26:10, 11
3. The Broadening Field
   Acts 8:4–40; 9:2, 10; 10:1–48; 11:19
4. The Decisive Step
   Acts 11:20–24; John 1:11
5. The New Name
   Acts 11:25, 26

1. THE FIRST COMMUNITY AND JUDAISM

The account given in our sources indicates clearly the attitude of the early disciples toward Judaism. "Let all the house of Israel," said Peter in his first reported address, "understand beyond a doubt that God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this very Jesus whom you crucified," and again, "The promise is meant for you and for your children." We see "Peter and John on their way up to the Temple for the hour of prayer at three in the afternoon." Later, Peter tells the Jews that "the God who glorified Jesus is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob," and says: "Repent then, that the Lord may send Jesus, your long decreed Messiah." He quotes Moses as saying: "The Lord, your God, will raise up a prophet for you from among your brotherhood as he raised me," and adds: "It was for you that God raised up his servant and sent him to bless you by turning each

one of you from your wicked ways." "Now I know, brothers," he said to them, evidently in a conciliatory attitude, "that you acted in ignorance like your fathers."

This same note of loyalty to Judaism runs all through Stephen's speech. Anti-legalistic it undoubtedly is, but there is no indication that he thought of doing away with Judaism. He wanted, rather, to reform and purify it after the manner of the Old Testament prophets. He referred to it as "Living Oracles" and "the Law that angels transmitted." Peter's attitude is indicated by his answer in the vision that came to him with reference to eating meats that were forbidden by the Jewish law: "No, no, my Lord," he said, when asked to partake, "I have never eaten anything ceremonially unclean." When he returned to Jerusalem after obeying his vision by visiting a Roman army captain, some of the disciples complained, saying: "You went into the houses of men who are not Jews and you ate with them!" He had to defend himself by telling them the story of the vision.

When Paul and Barnabas returned from their first journey among the Gentiles and "reported how God had been with them and what he had done, some of the believers who belonged to the pharisaic party got up and said, 'Gentiles must be made Jews and told to observe the law of Moses.'" And even much later, when Paul made his last visit to Jerusalem near the close of his career, the leaders among the disciples there advised him to conciliate the Jewish disciples by going through a Jewish ceremony in the Temple. They said to him: "Brother, you see how many thousands of believers there are among the Jews, all of whom are ardent upholders of the Law."

From these quotations it is evident that the little brotherhood of disciples did not at first constitute an organization apart from Judaism, nor does it appear that they had any aspirations in that direction for a considerable time. In fact, they thought of themselves as loyal Jews, more loyal indeed than those who were not disciples, for as has been seen, they believed that they constituted the true Israel—the faithful "remnant," spoken of by the prophets. The only apparent difference between them and other pious Jews was that they accepted Jesus as the Messiah and looked for his speedy return to take up his messianic work. This did not make them less loyal to Judaism. They worshiped daily in the Temple and no doubt continued to observe all the details of the Jewish law, even more zealously than ever, that they might be ready for the coming of the Kingdom.

They believed that Jesus would soon return to "restore the Kingdom to Israel," and when his coming was delayed, they came to the conclusion that the reason for the delay was to give the Jewish people "a breathing space"—an opportunity to repent and accept him as Messiah in order that "all things should be restored" to primitive or Mosaic loyalty and devotion to Jehovah. With this idea came the conviction that it was their mission to "let all the house of Israel understand beyond a doubt that God had made Jesus both Lord and Messiah." Other people, of course, should be included in the Kingdom, but they must come in through the door of Judaism.

The fact that for a considerable period, probably for two or three years after the Crucifixion, the disciples were permitted to teach the messiahship of Jesus in

Jerusalem with practically no opposition, shows that they were regarded as another Jewish sect like the Essenes. The Jewish leaders evidently believed that in putting Jesus to death they had accomplished their purpose, and they looked on his few plebeian disciples as harmless fanatics whose adherence to a "Messiah" who had suffered the shameful death of crucifixion seemed to cap the climax of their absurd superstition. The fact that they were still faithfully observing the forms of the law freed them from suspicion.

On two occasions during this period the leaders of the disciples were arrested and brought before the temple authorities at the instigation of the Sadducees, the ruling party. The Sadducees were probably not concerned with the teaching of the disciples. There was in it so far no note of disloyalty to the institutions of Judaism. The Sadducees, who were the political rather than the religious leaders, did not trouble themselves about questions of orthodoxy so long as the existing political state of affairs which they dominated was not threatened. The cause for their interference was the fear that the disciples might cause a revolutionary disturbance. The arrests were made when large crowds had been attracted by the cures performed by the apostles in the name of Jesus, which were undoubtedly of the same nature as those performed by Jesus himself.

In both cases the leaders were merely threatened and told to be more discreet in their utterance. This was a perfectly natural procedure in view of the fact that the object of the political leaders was merely to prevent the occasion for the disturbances which they believed were caused by these fanatical public preachers. The Sad-

ducees seem to have been satisfied with the result of their warnings, as they do not appear to have taken part in the arrest of Stephen later. There was thus far no break with Judaism but only an effort at reformation from within.

It should not be inferred, however, that these early disciples were not conscious of anything new in their message. They had in them something entirely different from Judaism—the spiritual conception of religion imparted to them by Jesus, the free spirit that was destined sooner or later to break through the narrow confines of Judaism and become a world-religion.

The profound and revolutionary message of Jesus, so antagonistic to the teaching of the scribes and Pharisees, the exponents of orthodox Judaism, was by no means forgotten, as the gospel records show. It had only for the moment fallen into the background, obscured, on the one hand, by the novelty of their being at the very heart of Judaism in the sacred precincts of the Temple, and, on the other, by their vivid expectation of their Master's speedy return. At first they were trying to pour this "new wine into old wine skins." They had no idea of breaking away from their ancestral religion. They expected rather to restore it to its primitive purity and power. At the same time, while they were in Judaism, they were in reality not of it but essentially of a different nature incompatible with Judaism, and it was inevitable that a separation should come.

2. THE CONFLICT WITH JUDAISM

How did this community of loyal Jews become independent of Judaism, so as to inaugurate a world-religion with a new name? This change was of far-reaching

significance. Without it there would have been no organization known as Christianity—no new religion, but merely another sect in Judaism beating out its life against the iron bars of a rigid monotheistic dogmatism, and destined to disappear even as a sect as years passed by and Jesus did not return.

The cause of the separation has already been intimated. It was the inherent strength of the movement itself—the broad, free spirit of Jesus, who, as we have seen before, was not interested in Jews merely as Jews, but in Jews as men. It was the fact, to which the author of Acts makes little allusion, that Jesus' message, now seething in the minds and hearts of the disciples, was utterly incompatible with the teaching of orthodox Judaism, and even without their will or intention started the new movement in a separate career. The change was accelerated by the conversion in increasing numbers of Hellenists, or Jews of the Dispersion, who had resided for some time in other lands, and, while retaining their religion, had adopted the Greek language and to a greater or less extent Greek customs. These Jews naturally had a wider outlook, a cosmopolitan attitude, and the free spirit of Jesus' teaching appealed to them.

There was a liberalizing influence at work even in Palestine at this time—a tendency for the synagogue and the rabbi to take the place of the Temple and the priest. This tendency was much more marked outside of Palestine where the influence of the Temple worship was not so potent. A natural parallel was drawn between the synagogue and the Greek philosophical schools, and the Jews themselves endeavored to show that the teaching of these schools was founded on the Mosaic Law.

The foreign Jews soon recognized the incompatibility of Jesus' free spiritual religion with the rigid legalism of the Temple worship and teaching, and gradually came to see that its acceptance meant a practical displacement of the Mosaic Law. The liberality of Jesus' teaching attracted the Hellenists, and at the same time their cosmopolitan point of view gave a freer interpretation of it and a desire to present it as a universal message. At the same time, a break between them and their Palestinian brothers was made more probable by the reason of the fact that they were looked down on as aliens, and regarded with more or less suspicion because of their culture and tolerance.

While it was thus inevitable that sooner or later the new movement would break the bonds of Judaism, the occasion of the beginning of the break was furnished by the Jews themselves in that the jealousy caused by the increasing numbers of the disciples after a time manifested itself in open opposition, and finally in persecution.

The first intimation of the break came when the number of the disciples became so great as to attract attention, especially when some men of ability, position, and influence joined their ranks. Many of these were no doubt Hellenists. This is indicated by the appointment of seven men to look after their poor, "who were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food." All of the men chosen had Greek names and were probably the leading men among the Hellenists, as is indicated by the reported words of the Twelve: "Brothers, look out seven of your own number, men of good reputation, who are full of the Spirit and of wisdom."

In this trouble over details of administration, we can see in its incipiency the separation of this early community into two denominations, a separation of which the real cause lay in the different points of view indicated above.

It was one of these Hellenist leaders named Stephen, evidently a man of marked ability and influence, who became the center of attack. Stephen carried on an active campaign in the Hellenistic synagogues in Jerusalem with great success. This aroused the jealousy and bitter opposition of the more zealous Jews among the Hellenists who accused him before the Sanhedrin on the charge of blasphemy—the same charge on which Jesus had been brought before this tribunal and with a similar foundation.

The cause of the opposition to Stephen was not really that he taught that Jesus abrogated the Law, as the "false witnesses" testified. On the contrary, he called it "living oracles" and based his whole argument upon it. His reported speech before the Sanhedrin is not so much a defense as a summary of his teaching. It is distinctly anti-legalistic and gives clear indication that his attitude could easily have been interpreted as deprecating the Temple in that he taught that it was not essential to the true worship of God. There is, however, nothing in it to indicate a definite repudiation of the Law.

The real cause of the opposition was then, as it always has been, in the case of a religious reformer from the earliest prophets to the present time, that by placing the emphasis on the spiritual side of worship and in consequence taking so decided a position of antagonism to the current legalism, he aroused the fear that the formal

side, as exhibited in the ritualistic Temple worship might be neglected and ultimately superseded. In other words, then as always, the legalists feared that the destruction of legalism meant the destruction of their religion. They felt that he virtually denied the authority of the ritual law, formal conformity to which constituted the sum total of their religion, felt it so keenly that they killed him. And he was so convinced of the truth of his position that he would not soften his words, but drove them to kill him. The case of Stephen is exactly parallel with that of Jesus.

Stephen had not fully come to the position later taken by Paul that Christianity was to supplant Judaism, although he had come much farther in this direction than had the Twelve, and much farther no doubt than he himself realized. It was the free spirit of Jesus referred to before, eloquently and forcefully finding utterance through a powerful advocate, that gave offense, as is always the case when the spiritual comes into conflict with the legalistic in religion.

The theme of the speech is found in the words: "Stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ear. You are always resisting the holy Spirit. As with your fathers, so with you! Which of the prophets did your fathers fail to persecute? They killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One. And here you have betrayed him, murdered him! You who got the law that angels transmitted and have not obeyed it." It was the same accusation as that of Jesus. The religious leaders themselves were committing the sin of which they accused him—resisting the Law of God. This sin was

characteristic of them as of their fathers. He cited from their history instance after instance of disobedience to the will of God and made the climax of disobedience the rejection of Jesus, the God-sent Messiah of the prophets.

Stephen's reference to the Temple indicates the ground of their accusation. He taught, as did Jesus, that mere formal worship was not accepted by God, that it was not enough to worship in the Temple. God might be worshiped "in spirit and in reality" even in temples not made with hands. There was nothing in his speech to substantiate the charge of blasphemy. The occasion for this charge is indicated by the words of the false witnesses: "This fellow is never done talking against this holy place and the Law." This was how they interpreted his teaching of spiritual religion and his reference to the Temple as not being fundamental in worship. But his closing words, when in a moment of exaltation he cried out: "Look! I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at God's right hand!" furnished the excuse for condemnation. The real cause was the rage of his accusers excited by his scathing denunciation of their sin in resisting the Spirit of God. It was this that threw them into such a frenzy of rage that they became like wild beasts and "gnashed at him with their teeth."

The execution of this bold leader was the signal for a general persecution of the new sect, led by a young rabbi from the Greek city of Tarsus, who had been his chief opponent and the mouthpiece of the religious leaders among the Pharisees. The Jewish leaders were now thoroughly aroused—the Sadducees because of

Stephen's remarks about the Temple, which seemed to be aimed at their political supremacy, and the Pharisees because of his scathing denunciation of their iron-bound legalism and his advocacy of spiritual religion. In fact, the cause of enmity to Stephen and the disciples whom they associated with him was identical with that which caused the death of Jesus—the old struggle between the legal and the spiritual in religion.

This first persecution seems to have been carried on for a time with considerable severity, "and all with the exception of the apostles were scattered over Judea and Samaria. . . . . Saul made havoc of the church by entering one house after another, dragging off men and women and consigning them to prison." The severity of the persecution is indicated by Paul's reference to it long afterward as given in Acts: "I persecuted this way of religion to the death, chaining and imprisoning both men and women. . . . . When they were put to death I voted against them; there was not a synagogue where I did not often punish them, and in my frantic frenzy I persecuted them, even to foreign towns."

3. THE BROADENING FIELD

"That day a severe persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem and all with the exception of the apostles were scattered over Judea and Samaria. . . . . Those who had to scatter went through the land preaching the Good News." These words from the Book of Acts refer to what happened immediately after the death of Stephen. The execution of this bold leader brought matters to a crisis at once. It marked the initial stage of a new era in the progress of the new

movement—a distinct break with Judaism and the establishment of an independent organization with a new name.

Up to this time all the disciples were content to remain loyal Jews, faithfully observing the Temple worship and the details of the Mosaic ritual, apparently without any thought of establishing a new religion. Even now the Palestinian disciples, represented by their leaders, the Twelve, do not seem to have recognized any line of cleavage. The account says that "all were scattered except the apostles." These were evidently so strict in their observance of the details of the Jewish forms and ceremonies and so conservative in their utterances that they avoided all suspicion of disloyalty to Judaism. "Those who had to scatter" were the Hellenistic disciples like Philip, and their persecutors were Hellenistic Jews like Paul. These Hellenistic disciples had been loyal Jews but they now found themselves branded as heretics and outcasts and hunted like outlaws. As Paul tells us later, some of them were thrown into prison, some were scourged publicly in the synagogues in order to compel them to give up their allegiance to Jesus by cursing his name, and some like Stephen were put to death.

This treatment by the Jewish leaders naturally raised the question as to what was first in their religious allegiance, loyalty to the Mosaic Law as interpreted by the Jewish religious leaders or to the messiahship and lordship of Jesus. They did not see the final result, but they were compelled to choose, and they put Jesus first and "went everywhere preaching the Good News" of his messiahship. Thus it came about that it was the

Hellenistic disciples who became the first messengers of the new faith, while the Palestinian Jewish disciples escaped persecution and remained in Jerusalem because they were still loyal to the strictly Jewish point of view.

This first persecution does not seem to have lasted very long. The Jewish leaders were probably satisfied with the scattering of the Hellenistic disciples, and a period of peace followed. The Twelve seemed to have been contented to remain in Jerusalem, awaiting their Master's return. They do not seem to have left Jerusalem until about twelve years after the death of Stephen, when a second persecution was begun by Herod Agrippa I, a grandson of Herod the Great. This puppet of the Roman government, although irreligious and profligate, posed as a champion of strict Pharisaism and persecuted the disciples in order to secure popularity.

This time the persecution was directed against the leaders of the disciples, and one of the Twelve, "James the brother of John," was put to death. Peter and probably others had to flee for their lives. This persecution was cut short in 44 A.D. by the sudden death of Herod Agrippa from a loathsome disease attributed by the disciples to the judgment of God. The Palestinian disciples seem now to have grown still more conservative, evidently in fear of a break with Judaism. Under the leadership of "James the Lord's brother" the Jerusalem community continued to be increasingly suspicious of the gentile disciples and zealous to be regarded as loyal Jews until the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.

Thus it was the religious bigotry and intolerance of their own countrymen, finally developing into persecution,

that opened up a new field which at first the Hellenistic disciples and afterward even some of the Twelve were compelled to enter. Many of these Hellenists had acquired a competence by the exercise of their commercial talents and industry in foreign lands and had "retired" to Jerusalem to spend their lives in peace and prosperity in the "Holy City" within the shadow of the sacred Temple, the earthly abode of the God of their fathers. When driven out by persecution, most of them naturally returned to their former homes in the commercial centers of the Empire.

These disciples are not to be regarded as traveling evangelists. They had to make their living. But they could not refrain from telling the "good news" which was now a large part of their very lives. Wherever they settled they gathered around them little companies of converts which became communities patterned after the first community at Jerusalem. These communities came to be called *ekklesiai*, a Greek word referring to assemblies of people gathered into some public place for deliberation. The name *ekklesiai* was adopted by the disciples to refer particularly to their little communities when assembled for worship. This is the word that is translated "church" in the New Testament.

We do not know much in detail of the progress of this first preaching of the "good news" in the new field outside of Jerusalem. A few instances are given in Acts as samples of progress toward the acceptance of the Gentiles and independence of Judaism evidently with the intention of leading up to the great and decisive work of the author's hero, the great apostle Paul. There is no reason to doubt that the vivid pictures thus given

are true to life and typical of the work of all the "scattered" disciples.

It was natural that the Samaritans should be the first people outside of Judaism to receive with favor the proclamation of the coming of the messianic Kingdom. Their acceptance as disciples was not a complete departure from Judaism, for they worshiped Jehovah and observed the Jewish rites, accepting the five books of Moses commonly called the "Pentateuch." They were less intolerant than the Jews and consequently constituted a more promising field for the Hellenist Philip, one of the Seven. Samaria was on the way to his home in Caesarea in the north of Palestine. We are told that Philip "went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed the Messiah there" with great success. It is probable that he began his work in the same region formerly visited by Jesus, and his success may have been due in large measure to the seed sown at that time.

A greater step is represented as having been taken by Philip in the conversion of an Ethiopian officer, a proselyte, who came to worship at Jerusalem. The work in Samaria evidently continued for a considerable time. The news reached Jerusalem Peter and John went to Samaria to see what was being done and remained to assist in the work. When they returned, Philip probably accompanied them and in this way heard of the visit of the Ethiopian officer. The visit of the treasurer of the queen of Ethiopia, the famous kingdom in the far-distant southland, would make a sensation in Jerusalem. As he "had come to Jerusalem for worship" he probably had brought rich gifts to the Temple and he would be the chief topic of interest in the city at that time.

Philip would naturally see in this visit of the treasurer an excellent opportunity to send the "good news" to the great southern kingdom. As has been noted, all these early disciples believed that they were under the direct guidance of the Spirit. He would then, of course, naturally obey the impulse that came to him to follow the treasurer when he departed, in order to have a good opportunity to tell him of the Messiah.

The fact that the Ethiopian treasurer was reading a passage from Isaiah about Jehovah's suffering servant and thinking about its interpretation is an indication that he had heard the disciples in Jerusalem referring to that passage as being fulfilled in Jesus as the Messiah. His acceptance as a disciple was not yet a complete break with Judaism, owing to the fact that he was evidently a proselyte, but it shows a gradual extension of the field of operation as he was not a born Jew, and it is for this reason that it was reported.

A still greater step is reported as having been taken by Peter, probably a considerable time afterward, in accepting a Roman army captain of Caesarea, without compelling him to accept Jewish rites. This captain was a worshiper of Jehovah but had not become a proselyte. Because of his impulsive nature we should expect Peter to be the first of the Twelve to break through the barrier that separated the Gentiles from the privilege of discipleship. His action in this case is especially noteworthy as being the beginning of the break of the Palestinian disciples with strict legalism.

The account of this incident tells us that he was specially prepared by a vision, but we understand that visions come to those who are ready to receive them.

A man of Peter's impressionable nature could not but have been deeply affected by the eloquent anti-legalistic preaching and the consequent martyrdom of Stephen. He had probably long been wrestling with this problem. There is a strong intimation of this in the fact that "in Joppa he stayed for some time at the house of Simon, a tanner." This was contrary to orthodox Jewish custom, as the tanner's trade was "unclean" before the Law.

Peter must have been growing impatient with the trammels of legalistic Judaism, or he would not have been lodging at the house of a tanner. No doubt he recalled the striking words of Jesus, when condemning the petty traditions of the Pharisees: "Nothing outside a man can defile him by entering him; it does not enter his heart, but his stomach." It will be remembered that Mark got his gospel from Peter. These words he had no doubt often heard him quote, and the interpretation, "thus he pronounced all food clean," would naturally come from the same source. Peter would be thinking over this problem and wondering what his colleagues at Jerusalem would say if they knew where he was staying. In this state of mind he fell asleep. Thus we have a natural setting for his vision.

It was just what we might expect of Peter that he should go at once to the house of the Roman captain, Cornelius, when invited, and speak his message, especially since Cornelius was already a devout worshiper of Jehovah. It is quite likely too that Cornelius had been prepared for his vision and desire to hear Peter by the preaching of Philip, whose home was at Caesarea, for we cannot believe that a disciple who was so active and

eloquent in telling the "good news" on his way would be silent when he arrived home.

Cornelius and his household readily accepted Peter's enthusiastic and convincing message, and the same signs of the Spirit's presence were quickly seen by Peter, giving him confident assurance of the acceptability to God of the gentile captain and his associates without Jewish rites. When he was taken to task by his Jewish brothers on his return to Jerusalem, he defended his position by relating his vision and especially by the evidence of the gift of the Spirit bestowed on the converts. There is no intimation that the Jerusalem disciples recognized in this case a definite breaking-down of the wall between Jews and Gentiles. It was approved as a special case authorized by a vision. Association with the Gentiles was not approved but merely their acceptance as disciples after the analogy of proselytes, probably with the idea that they would later completely accept Judaism.

4. THE DECISIVE STEP

"Now those who had been scattered by the trouble which arose over Stephen made their way as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch." The decisive step that brought about the distinct recognition of the disciples as a separate religious organization took place outside of Palestine in a gentile city, Antioch, the capital of the Roman province of Syria. This city was well fitted to become the cradle of gentile Christianity. It was one of the largest cities in the Empire and the meeting point of the commerce and civilization of the East and West. Josephus, the contemporary Jewish historian, tells us that it stood next to Alexandria in the

number of its Jewish citizens, and that these were very active in making proselytes, of whom there was a very large number in the city.

"But they preached the word to none except Jews," says our earliest account. Even Paul, who gloried in his apostleship to the Gentiles, said later, when referring to the "good news," that it was "for the Jew first." This was natural. All of the first disciples were Jews. They believed that Jesus was the glorified Messiah, that is to say, the King of the Jews exalted to the right hand of God, and that he would soon return "to restore the Kingdom to Israel." They believed also that his disciples now constituted the true Israel, and that it was their mission to "let all the house of Israel understand beyond a doubt that God had made him both Lord and Messiah," and to bring all their countrymen to accept him as they had done. His return was delayed until this should be accomplished, and thus the nation "restored" to its primitive loyalty to Jehovah.

"Some of them, however, were Cypriotes and Cyrenians who on reaching Antioch told the Greeks also the 'good news' concerning the Lord Jesus. The strong hand of the Lord was with them and a large number believed and turned to the Lord." Here in Antioch for the first time the message of the disciples was brought to Gentiles who were entirely outside of Judaism. This was a natural step for the Hellenistic disciples to take. They were loyal Jews who had left their homes in various commercial centers of the Empire and had taken up their abode in Jerusalem within the precincts of the Temple to enjoy the supreme privileges of its worship and the fellowship of their

kinsmen. Now they were driven out like enemies and aliens. Like their Master, they "had come to what was their own yet their own people did not welcome them." There was nothing now to do but to come back to their old friends, the Gentiles, with whom they had done business all their lives, and whom they had found human.

Their first thought, as has been seen, was that they must make disciples of all the Jews, but the Jews had decisively and scornfully rejected their message. Yet the Kingdom must be filled with citizens. They probably began to recall Jesus' universal teaching, and so to see meaning they had not before perceived in such sayings of his as: "Many I tell you will come from East and West and take their places beside Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the Kingdom of Heaven, while the sons of the Kingdom will pass outside into the darkness." They found the Greeks as responsive as the Jews had been unresponsive, and this showed them that "the strong right hand of the Lord was with them."

The Acts account tells us that so many Greeks became disciples that "the news reached the Church in Jerusalem," and they dispatched Barnabas to Antioch. It will be remembered that Barnabas was a wealthy Hellenist, a native of Cyprus, who had become famous in the first community in Jerusalem by reason of his eloquence and generosity. He had sold one of his estates and given the entire proceeds to the common cause. The Jerusalem disciples would naturally have confidence in him and think of him in connection with work among the Greeks because of his familiarity with their language and customs. In fact, as he was one of

the Hellenists who had been driven from Jerusalem at the time of Stephen's death, he was in all probability one of the "Cypriotes who on reaching Antioch told the Greeks also the 'good news' concerning the Lord Jesus." He became the leader of the new work among the Greeks and "considerable numbers of people were brought in for the Lord."

This new field was so fruitful and extensive that Barnabas needed help. He recognized a great opportunity for his great message and began to think of the best possible man, one fitted by his talents and education for such a great task. He thought of his old friend, Saul of Tarsus, who had probably been a fellow-student at the great school of Gamaliel in Jerusalem, and whom he had introduced to the apostles in Jerusalem on his visit there three years after his conversion. The apostles were afraid of Saul, but Barnabas undoubtedly assured them that he knew him well, and if he said he was a disciple they could depend on it. He knew that Saul had been for several years since that time preaching the "good news" with success in Syria and his home province of Cilicia.

5. THE NEW NAME

"So Barnabas went off to Tarsus to look for Saul and, on finding him, brought him to Antioch where for a whole year they were guests of the Church and taught a large number of people. It was at Antioch, too, that the disciples were originally called 'Christians,'" Barnabas and Saul were so successful that a large community of Greek disciples was formed. According to Jewish custom, no Jews, not even Hellenists, could

live with these Greeks, and consequently they were recognized as a distinct body, not Jews in any sense. Thus the necessity arose for a new name.

This name was not given by the disciples themselves. When they thought of themselves in relation to Jesus they called themselves "disciples," as he had called them. When they thought of themselves in relation to one another they called themselves "brothers," as he had taught them to be. When they thought of their relation to the outside world of unbelievers they called themselves by a name which is translated "saints," a Greek word meaning "set apart" or "consecrated." The name "Christians" was not used by the disciples in these early days in referring to themselves. It could not have been given the disciples by the Jews for that would have been in the nature of an acknowledgment of their claim to be followers of the true Messiah (Christ). The Jews called them "the Sect of the Nazarenes," or simply "Nazarenes," and continued to do so for centuries.

The name "Christians" must have been coined by the Greeks after the general analogy of such words as "Herodians," the designation of the partisans of Herod. It was given as necessity arose for a new designation. Up to that time the disciples had been Jews, and the Greeks did not distinguish them from other Jews but called them all Jews. But now a large community of disciples was formed who were not Jews in any sense, not having accepted Jewish rites, not living with Jews. The other Greeks heard them speak so much of "Christos" that they thought this term was a proper name instead of a title, and so called them "*Christianoi*," or "Christians," partisans or adherents of Christ.

The use of this new name marks a distinct stage in the rise of Christianity. The movement was before this time regarded as a mere sect of Judaism. It was now recognized as a new religion independent of Judaism and entered upon a new field—the Roman Empire, which was practically coextensive with the world of that day and was ready for a new leader to organize it for the conquest of this new field and its consequent establishment as a world-religion.

SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS

1. McGiffert, *Apostolic Age*, pp. 81–112.
2. Scott, *The Beginning of the Church*, pp. 109–32; 224–50.
3. Case, *Evolution of Early Christianity*, pp. 120–65.
4. Dobschütz, *The Apostolic Age*, pp. 28–36.
5. Kent, *Work and Teachings of the Apostles*, pp. 52–67.
6. Bartlet, *Apostolic Age*, pp. 18–52.
7. Weizsäcker, *The Apostolic Age*, I, 59–78.
8. Ropes, *The Apostolic Age in the Light of Modern Criticism*, pp. 81–87.

CHAPTER IX

THE NEW LEADER

PREPARATION AND MESSAGE OF PAUL

1. His Preparation
   Acts 7:58; 8:1, 3; 9:1, 2; 18:3; 22:3–5; 23:25–27; 26:4–11; Phil. 3:3–11; Gal. 1:13, 14; I Cor. 15:9; I Tim. 1:13
2. His Call
   Gal. 1:15–17, I Cor. 9:1; 15:8, 35–57; II Cor. 4:6; Rom. 1:5; 7:7–25; Phil. 3:7–11; Acts 9:1–19*a*; 22:6–16; 26:12–19
3. His Probation
   Gal. 1:17–24; I Cor. 15:3; II Cor. 11:32, 33; Acts 9:19*b*–30; 11:19–30; 12:25; 22:17–21; Rom. 15:20
4. His Message
   Gal. 1:6–9, 11–21; 2:1; 3:1–14; 5:13–26; Rom. 1:5, 14–17; 2:6–16; 3:9–12, 20–31; 4:1–16; 5:1–11; 6:14–16; 8:1–7, 14–17, 28–39; 12:1—13:10; I Cor. 6:20; II Cor. 5:18–20; Eph. 1:7; Mark 10:45

1. HIS PREPARATION

I am a Jew, a native of Tarsus of Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city, brought up in this city [Jerusalem], educated at the feet of Gamaliel in all the strictness of our ancestral law and naturally full of zeal for God . . . . whom I serve from my forefathers in a pure conscience. . . . . I was circumcised on the eighth day after birth; I belonged to the race of Israel, to the tribe of Benjamin; I was a Hebrew and the son of Hebrews, a Pharisee as regards the law, in point of ardor a persecutor of the Church, immaculate by the standard of legal righteousness. In Judaism I outstripped many of my own age and race in my special ardor for the ancestral traditions of my house. . . . . I am a Roman citizen and was so born.

In these words we have a choice bit of biography of the man who was to become the new leader of the movement

that had its inception in the work of John the Baptist and Jesus, and had now come to a critical point in its development. Recognized at Antioch as a separate religion independent of Judaism, it was ready to enter the world-wide field of the Roman Empire. Here it must enter into competition with all the established religions and philosophies of the Greeks and Romans—a seemingly Herculean task for the leadership of the simple fishermen of Galilee, Peter, James and John, and others of the original Twelve who had thus far held the direction of the little communities. In consequence, there was urgent need of a new leader—a man of extraordinary attainments fitted for an extraordinary task.

Except in Antioch the disciples were still regarded as a Jewish sect. The one man bold enough to preach a spiritual religion in Jerusalem, and in so doing to condemn the hypocrisy of legalistic Judaism, had been stoned to death, and his sympathizers driven from the city. There was urgent need of a man of great natural capacities and thorough mental training who could interpret the new religion to the Graeco-Roman world, and meet the leaders among the Greeks and Romans on an intellectual plane. None of the Twelve were equal to such a task. The Fourth Gospel represents Jesus as saying to them on one occasion near the end of his ministry: "I have still much to say to you but you cannot bear it just now," and on various occasions the other gospels represent them as not understanding him. They did not have sufficient breadth of mind and education to grasp the great new ideas he presented

Jesus' message was for the world but he himself could go only to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

Peter made a beginning with the Roman captain, Cornelius, but he was not equal to the task of carrying this idea out to its logical conclusion. The new movement needed a man who could "become all things to all men," who could meet on their own intellectual plane Jewish rabbis in the synagogues, Roman magistrates in the law courts, and Greek philosophers in the schools. Saul of Tarsus, or Paul, to use his better-known Greek name, a Hebrew son of Hebrew parents, educated at the feet of the greatest teacher of his day, citizen of the famous Greek university city, and at the same time a free-born Roman, satisfied these requirements. In an exceptionally true sense he was the "man of the hour."

As in the case of Jesus, the exact date of his birth is unknown. In fact, it cannot be fixed within as narrow limits as can that of Jesus. In the account of the stoning of Stephen about 35 A.D. he is referred to as "a young man." According to Greek usage, this might mean anywhere from twenty to thirty. He was probably about thirty, for before that age he could not have been a member of the Sanhedrin, as seems to have been the case from his reference to his voting against the disciples in the persecution that followed. About thirty years afterward, when in prison at Rome, he refers to himself as an "old man," which he would hardly have done before sixty. Accordingly, we may conclude that he was born between 1 A.D. and 5 A.D., being from five to ten years younger than Jesus.

Paul was a native of Tarsus in the Roman province of Cilicia, 12 miles from the Mediterranean and 500 miles from Jerusalem. It was a "free city" and accord-

ingly enjoyed valuable rights and privileges, having administration of its own finances, authority over its own citizens, and exemption from the Roman land tax and garrison. In Paul's day it was one of the three greatest centers of education and culture. Strabo, the geographer, who lived there from 54 B.C. to 24 A.D., ranks it as the greatest center of philosophy in the world, and says that Rome was full of learned men from Tarsus and Alexandria. It was the seat of a great university dating back to the time of Alexander the Great. Near by was the home of the poet Aratus from whom Paul quoted in his speech at Athens. Tarsus was thus a university city of the highest repute.

This large city, famous over all the world for its devotion to learning and the best civilization, must have exerted a great influence on the alert and ambitious mind of Paul who passed there his boyhood and probably several years after his period of study in Jerusalem. The scenery too, like that of Nazareth, was inspiring and uplifting. He could climb the adjacent hills and look out over the vast expanse of the "Great Sea" with the multitudes of ships from all parts of the world, for Tarsus was a center of trade between the East and the West. No doubt he often contemplated in imagination that world over which he was later to travel so widely, and no doubt he often conversed with sailors and travelers from all countries. Thus he became cosmopolitan in outlook, fitted in an eminent degree for leadership of a world-movement.

Our knowledge of Paul's family and home training is very limited. What we know is gathered from a few incidental allusions in his letters and Acts. He does

not himself refer to relatives or private affairs. He had left all for the great cause in which he became so deeply absorbed that he forgot self and personal relationships. He was, however, proud of his pure Hebrew descent. Writing to the Philippians, he says: "I could rely on hereditary inheritance if I chose. Whoever thinks he can rely on that I can outdo him. I belonged to the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew, the son of Hebrews." His pure Hebrew descent may also be inferred from his membership in the Sanhedrin, as none but pure Jews were eligible.

In view of the fact that Paul's father was a Roman citizen the family must have been of considerable dignity and influence, for in those days "to be a Roman was to be a King." The fact that he learned a trade, that of making goat-hair fabric for shoes, mats, and all kinds of coverings, a native Cilician industry, does not indicate that his family was poor or belonged to the lower class. Every Jew taught his son a trade. One of the great rabbis is credited with the saying: "He that does not teach his son a trade does the same as teach him to be a thief." Roman citizenship would have meant much to him at home, but it meant incalculably more in his world-travels. It is true that he suffered many indignities from the Jews from which a Roman should have been exempt, but it was because he would not appeal to his right when dealing with his own countrymen. On other occasions his citizenship was of great benefit. It gave him honorable release from prison in Philippi, saved him from scourging in Jerusalem, and enabled him to save his life from the Jews in Caesarea by appeal to Caesar.

Thus there were three things in Paul's life of which he was proud—his native city, his pure Hebrew descent, and his Roman citizenship. All of these were of great advantage to him as a leader of the new movement. The first gave him a great educational advantage and a world-outlook; in fact, a natural preparation for his world-mission. The second put him in the strongest possible position for breaking down the "wall of partition" between Jews and Gentiles, and he used it often against his Jewish opponents. It gave him immediate access to the Jewish common people, as is seen in his address to a mob in Jerusalem which he began in their vernacular with the words: "I am a Jew." The third made possible to him access to all parts and all classes of the Empire and saved him many times from torture and death.

To the age of twelve or thirteen the education of Paul in the synagogue schools would be very similar to that of Jesus, to which we have referred before. When this period was reached and his course in the synagogue school ended, he was sent to Jerusalem for higher education. His Hebrew name "Saul" means "asked for," and it may be that like Samuel his parents dedicated him from infancy to Jehovah's service. This would agree with his statement in Galatians that "God had set him apart from his very birth." It would have been easier and more natural for him to have followed the occupation of his father, who was probably a merchant, but it was decided to send him away to be educated for a rabbi, a profession which combined the training and work of our minister, lawyer, and teacher in one.

The institutions of higher education for Jews were in Jerusalem, and the fact that young Paul had a married

sister living in that city probably facilitated his residence there. The two most famous schools in Jerusalem, the one liberal and the other conservative, were those of Hillel and Shammai. Paul attended the school of Hillel and his teacher was Gamaliel I, the greatest rabbi of that school, whose reputation is indicated by the statement in the Mishna that "at his death reverence for the law ceased and purity and abstinence died away."

The fact that Paul was sent to the liberal school indicates that his home training while strictly Jewish was yet not of the narrowest type. Gamaliel was one of few Jewish rabbis to use Greek literature, although some acquaintance with Greek literature and customs seems to have been necessary for members of the Sanhedrin. He is represented in Acts as a broad-minded, courageous leader. When other members of the Sanhedrin "were so furious that they determined to make away with the apostles, a Pharisee in the Sanhedrin called Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, who was highly respected by all the people, got up and said: 'Let these men alone. If their project or enterprise springs from men it will collapse; while if it really springs from God, you will be unable to put it down. You may even find yourselves fighting against God.'" Paul's famous speech at Athens reflects a like breadth, and it is by no means impossible that the tolerance of his great teacher was among the influences that contributed to his later thought.

In this school Paul acquired a thorough knowledge of the Old Testament and the power of sustained thought as well as the peculiar rabbinical methods of argumentation which appear in his Epistles. The content of the teaching of the school was the Law and the Prophets

and the comments of the wise men of Israel. It thus included law, theology, philosophy, and history. The method consisted of discussions and rapid questions and answers between students and teachers, and is illustrated by Luke's account of Jesus' visit to the Temple at the age of twelve where his parents "found him seated among the teachers listening to them and asking questions till all the hearers were amazed at the intelligence of his own answers."

The school of Shammai was devoted to the legalistic aspects of the Jewish religion, especially its ceremonial requirements. In the school of Hillel these were not neglected but the ethical and spiritual teachings of the great prophets were emphasized, such as that of Micah when he says: "With what shall I come before Jehovah? Will he be pleased with thousands of sacrifices? What does he require of thee but to do right, to love kindness and to walk humbly with thy God?"

As a Hellenist by early residence Paul would be interested in the world-propaganda of the Pharisees who "traversed sea and land to make one proselyte" with a success indicated in the statement in Acts that, at the time of the Pentecost following the Crucifixion, "there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven staying in Jerusalem." In all the Jewish teachings there was intense emphasis on monotheism, and this fact had a great world-appeal in Paul's day. Thus it may be seen that, despite all the narrowness of his Jewish education, it had three outstanding excellencies which gave Paul extraordinary preparation for his task, namely, an ethical atmosphere, a world-view, and a pure monotheism.

Paul's statement that he was "brought up" in Jerusalem at the feet of Gamaliel indicates that he was sent there when quite young, probably in his thirteenth year when he became a "son of the law," and that he remained there until his education was completed. After this he would naturally return to his home in Tarsus where he learned his trade. It would be in accord with his cosmopolitan point of view to take advantage of his residence in Tarsus to gain some knowledge of Greek culture at the famous university in that city.

We find him in Jerusalem a few years after the Crucifixion, when the early disciples were beginning to be noticed by the authorities. That he was not there during Jesus' ministry is clearly indicated by the fact that he makes no reference to having seen him, although there was often much urgency for such a statement. When charged by his enemies, especially at Corinth, with not being a genuine apostle because he had not seen Jesus, he refers only to the appearance after the Crucifixion. He may have returned to Jerusalem to become rabbi of the Cilician synagogue there, in which capacity his remarkable talents would quickly bring him into prominence.

As rabbi of the Cilician synagogue and member of the Sanhedrin, full of zeal for the religion of his fathers, it was natural that he should take a prominent part in persecuting the upstart sect that was championed by the eloquent Hellenist, Stephen, who had gone from one Hellenistic synagogue to another preaching the messiahship of Jesus and spiritual religion and condemning pharisaic legalism. One of these synagogues was the Cilician, and Paul was brought into collision with Stephen and led the attack on him. He saw that everything

was done according to the Jewish law. He took the garments of the witnesses that they might throw with greater precision. His zeal in this case brought him into prominence in the Sanhedrin, and he was given the leadership in stamping out the heresy.

Paul persecuted the disciples with a good conscience. "I once believed it my duty indeed," he afterward wrote, "actively to oppose the name of Jesus." He thought that in so doing he offered acceptable service to God. As a persecutor he had considerable success. Luke tells us that the persecution was "severe" and that "Paul devastated the church." Paul himself says: "I persecuted this way of religion to the death." "There was not a synagogue where I did not often punish them and force them to blaspheme and in my frantic fury I persecuted them even to foreign towns." He went to Damascus, evidently, because the disciples who were obnoxious to the Jewish authorities were "all scattered" from Jerusalem. However, the persecution seems not long to have survived the departure of its leading spirit, and, when he returned three years afterward, Peter and others were going about and preaching as usual.

2. HIS CALL

"God who set me apart from my very birth and called me by his grace chose to reveal his son within me." These are the words in which Paul himself refers to his conversion, of which more is written in the New Testament than of any other like event. It was the most significant occurrence in the history of the church. It led to a complete change in Paul's career. The fierce persecutor became the enthusiastic disciple and promoter

and the chief factor in determining the character and course of Christianity.

Paul had hoped to exterminate Christianity but a cause thrives on persecution. "Those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the gospel." "He secured a commission from the Sanhedrin empowering him to put any man or woman in chains whom he could find belonging to the Way and bring them to Jerusalem." What was his state of mind as he set out for Damascus? We learn from his letters that he was magnanimous and tender-hearted. Yet he was engaged in a fierce and brutal persecution. That he had compunctions is strongly indicated by the words that came to him in his vision later: "You hurt yourself by kicking at the goad," and especially by the autobiographical statement in his letter to the Romans (7:7–25). He was evidently trying to extinguish his doubts in his intense activity During the journey to Damascus, however, 150 miles through difficult roads, over steep hills, a journey intolerably slow on camels, occupying at least six days, he was compelled to take time to think.

Paul must have had several outstanding reasons for doubt with regard to his course of action. That he had become dissatisfied with the Law is seen from the seventh chapter of his letter to the Romans. He writes:

> Had it not been for the law I would not have known what sin meant Thus I would never have known what it is to covet unless the law had said, "You must not covet." The command gave me an impulse to sin. . . . . Sin sprang to life and I died. . . . . So this is my experience of the law. I want to do what is right but evil is continually suggested to me. I cordially agree with God's law so far as my inner self is concerned, but then I

find quite another law in my members which conflicts with the law of my mind and makes me prisoner to sin's law that resides in my members. . . . . Miserable wretch that I am, who will rescue me from this body of death?

Here he is interpreting his early experience in the light of his later knowledge. He had begun to doubt if a righteousness of forms and ceremonies was acceptable to God. There were at least some periods in his thinking when the righteousness of Judaism seemed to be a complete failure. The liberal teaching of the school of Hillel was having its effect. The fact that he was troubled shows the sincerity of his religious convictions. At first he thought the mere observance of the ceremonial law was all that was necessary to secure the favor of God. Then came a time when the negative commands of the Law suggested evil. What was forbidden became interesting. He began to think of and to practice it. He saw that he had broken the Law and so was under condemnation. Then came despair and he saw no way of deliverance from spiritual death. "Sin sprang to life," he said, "and I died."

The martyrdom of Stephen too must have had an influence on his keen mind and heart. Like himself Stephen was in all probability a Hellenist by birth and early residence, earnest and eloquent. Stephen's arguments for spiritual religion recalled the liberal teaching of Gamaliel. It is probable that it was from Paul on whose memory it must have been indelibly impressed that Luke got his vivid picture of the stoning. Paul saw the look of glory on Stephen's face as if the very light from heaven streamed upon it. "All who sat in the Sanhedrin fixed their eyes upon him and saw that his

face shone like the face of an angel." As Tennyson says: "God's glory smote him in the face." "Look!" said Stephen, "I see heaven opened and the Son of Man standing at God's right hand!" How striking a foretaste of Paul's own vision later, and how clear an indication of its nature.

Still another influence against satisfaction in the Law must have been the attitude of the persecuted Christians, of Stephen as well as all the others. He heard them preach Jesus and saw them die with forgiveness for their murderers on their lips. "Lord let not this sin stand against them" was a new note in religion. Their rite of baptism appealed to him as a striking symbol of death to the old life of sin and resurrection to a new life of purity. He came upon them in their happy celebration of the Last Supper as a beautiful symbol of brotherhood. He heard them pray for their persecutors and quote the loving, sympathetic, thrilling, hopeful words of Jesus. No doubt the question came to him: "What if they are right?" To stifle his doubts he had pressed on in fierce persecution. But now he was compelled to take time to think, and no doubt the question came to him again: "What if they are right?" The fact that he was traveling at noonday indicates unusual haste as it was the custom to rest and sleep at the noon hour.

At the end of a week of such thoughts as these, moving slowly across the desert sands, he came in sight of lovely, glittering Damascus, the "eye of the East," the "Paradise of God," on the beautiful rich ridge between the rivers Abana and Pharphar, where the disciples were trembling and praying for deliverance. Paul says, as recorded in Acts:

Suddenly at midday on the road I saw a light from heaven more dazzling than the sun flash round me and my fellow travelers. We all fell to the ground and I heard a voice saying to me in Hebrew, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? You hurt yourself by kicking at the goad." "Who are you?" I asked, and the Lord said, "I am Jesus and you are persecuting me. Now get up and stand on your feet for I have appeared to you in order to appoint you to my service as a witness to what you have seen and to the visions you will have of me." . . . . As I could not see by reason of the dazzling glare of that light my companions took me by the hand and so I came to Damascus. . . . . Therefore I did not disobey the heavenly vision.

Paul's own accounts in his letters—the earliest accounts of the event, written about thirty years before Acts—show what the vision meant to him. In Galatians he refers to it as the time "when God chose to reveal his Son within him." To the Corinthians he writes: "Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord?" And again, when giving a list of the appearances of Jesus after the Resurrection, he says: "Last of all, as it were to one of untimely birth, he appeared to me also." He probably had the same experience in mind when he wrote: "God who said 'Light shall shine out of darkness' has shone within my heart to illuminate men with the knowledge of God's glory in the face of Jesus Christ." Here he seems to have in mind the face of Jesus as he had seen it before he was blinded by the glaring light of his vision.

Nothing is said of the nature of the appearance but it can be inferred from the passage in his letter to the Corinthians where he is answering objectors to the Resurrection with reference to "what kind of a body" the dead have when they rise. He says: "It is sown (buried) an animal body, it rises a spiritual body. . . . .

Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God." In the Galatian account, the earliest we have and the most complete from Paul's own pen, it is not necessary to understand that all the details are given, but by reason of the controversial nature of the letter we certainly can understand that what Paul gives is what he regards as fundamental. This is the revelation of God's son "within him." It was a wonderful and startling vision of Jesus. As he had been "seen by Cephas, then by the twelve, and by over five hundred brothers all at once," so now he was seen by Paul. Stephen's vision was now his. Like Peter he never doubted again Jesus became his Messiah and the Master of his life. He was transformed into a dynamo of evangelical power to bring the "good news" to all the world.

That with the vision came the conviction of his mission to the Gentiles is indicated by the words quoted in Acts as coming from Jesus: "I will rescue you from the people and from the Gentiles to whom I send you that their eyes may be opened and that they may turn from darkness to light." The vision and the mission are also associated together in his account in the letter to the Galatians where he says: "God chose to reveal his son in me that I might preach him to the Gentiles." He refers to this conviction often in his letters. This is what we might expect; for Paul was from the gentile world and his environment and training had been such as to give him a world point of view.

3. HIS PROBATION

The good news which I preach is not a human affair; not from men as a source, nor by instruction as a method did I receive it. I had it by revelation of Jesus Christ. . . . . The God who had

set me apart from my very birth called me by his grace and when he chose to reveal his Son within me that I might preach him to the Gentiles, instead of consulting with any human being, instead of going up to Jerusalem, to see those who had been apostles before me, I went off at once into Arabia and on my return I came back to Damascus.

In these words Paul asserts his independence of the other apostles. Like Moses, Elijah, and other great souls, like his Master, Jesus himself, who sought solitude for meditation over a great life's task, so Paul, after his vision on the Damascus road, where his whole career was abruptly changed and he received his call to promote the cause he had been persecuting and carry the "good news" of Jesus as Messiah to the nations, "went off at once to Arabia."

In all probability he went to the region of Mount Sinai where Elijah had retired in the great crisis of his life, and where Moses had stood face to face with God and received the Law, the religion of his fathers. Here in the solitudes of nature he thought out his message—"his gospel"—in communion with his new-found Master. Only shallow souls plunge immediately into a task after such a crisis as that through which he had passed. Paul's "good news" must be his own—a vital message from his own soul. He had also to think out and plan his mighty campaign for carrying the "good news" to the Gentiles. It may well have been a temptation period like that of Jesus' forty days in the wilderness. At any rate, it was similar in that here he decided on his message and plan of operation. No mention is made in Acts of this retirement but this is in accord with the author's method. He makes no mention of Paul's letters and passes over in silence all incidents and episodes that do

not seem to him to be of significance in view of the purpose of his narrative.

We do not know how long he was in Arabia, but when he felt that he was ready he "came back to Damascus" and "lost no time in preaching throughout the synagogues that Jesus was the Son of God, to the amazement of all his hearers who said: 'Is not this the man who in Jerusalem harried those who invoke this name, who came here for the express purpose of carrying them all in chains to the high priests?'" The Jews were not able to meet his arguments. He "put them in confusion by his proofs that Jesus was the Messiah."

He must have had considerable success because the Jews became so enraged that they formed a plot to kill him and enlisted the co-operation of the state officials, in all probability on the ground that Paul was likely to stir up a revolution. He says later, when writing to the Corinthians: "In Damascus the ethnarch had patrols out in the city to arrest me but I was lowered in a basket through a loophole in the wall and so managed to escape his clutches." Acts tells us that the gates of the city were "watched night and day." The fact that Paul gives the details so long afterward shows what a vivid effect his humiliating experience with his countrymen had upon him. This experience was typical, for Jewish jealousy and hatred followed him everywhere.

"Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to make the acquaintance of Cephas," Paul writes to the Galatians. When he was driven from Damascus he seized the opportunity to visit Jerusalem and see Peter. It is natural that he should want to talk with the leading disciple of Jesus. In the two weeks he spent with Peter

he no doubt went into all the details of Jesus' life and got Peter's story of the "good news," perhaps very much as we have it in Mark. While he disclaims receiving the gospel from men—meaning not chiefly historical facts but the way of salvation—he expressly states when writing to the Corinthians that he had "passed on" to them what he had "received"; namely, certain salient facts of Jesus' life and teaching.

During this time too it is quite likely that he gave Peter some idea of his own world-view, and this may have helped Peter to take the step he later took with Cornelius. It was natural too for Paul at this time to enter into "conversations and arguments with the Hellenists" in Jerusalem. They soon became enraged with him, as with Stephen before him, and formed a plot to kill him. When he heard of it through the disciples, true to his nature, he wanted to stay on in spite of it, but in a vision in the Temple the commission came to him again even more urgently to go "to the Gentiles." So "the disciples took him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus."

In the "districts of Syria and Cilicia," his native province and the one between that and Palestine, Paul spent about seven years about which we know very little. In his letter to the Galatians he says: "The Christian churches of Judea . . . . heard 'our former persecutor is now preaching the faith he once persecuted,' which made them praise God for me." This preaching was in Syria and Cilicia. The account in Acts does not mention this work but indirectly confirms it by saying that at a later time "he made his way through Syria and Cilicia strengthening the churches." He must have

founded them himself as it was his rule "not to build on another man's foundation." We may understand, then, that during these seven years Paul preached to the Greeks in his home province and Syria with considerable success, and that while it was a period of training for a larger work it was by no means insignificant.

In this period probably occurred many of the trials and sufferings mentioned in writing to the Corinthians —the scourgings, imprisonments, shipwrecks, experiences with robbers and false brothers, sleepless nights, hunger and thirst, cold, nakedness, and anxiety—surely a fitting training school for the "world's greatest missionary." During this time too, according to his statement in II Corinthians, he had a remarkable vision in which he was "caught up into Paradise and heard secrets no human lips can repeat." This was evidently a still greater vision of Jesus as the Messiah and an encouragement to his faith in his world-mission.

It was at the end of this preparatory period that Barnabas "found him" and brought him to Antioch to help him in the great work that had been begun there among the Greeks. Barnabas probably wanted him particularly for this work because he knew of his views and of his success among the Greeks of his home province. Here, as we have seen before, they worked for a year with such success that necessity arose for the new name "Christians" to designate the large community of Greek disciples and distinguish them from the Jews.

During this time of residence in Antioch, Paul and Barnabas were intrusted with a contribution to the poor in Jersusalem made by the disciples in Antioch during

a time of famine. This is notable as being the first relief work done by an organized body of Christians, and no doubt it created a good feeling on the part of the Jerusalem church and made it less suspicious, for a time at least, of gentile Christianity. It probably also helped Paul later when he had to plead before the mother-church the right of the Gentiles to be recognized as disciples.

This period of comparative obscurity was a season of training in and for active service. Paul may or may not have studied at the Greek university in Tarsus but he certainly sat at the feet of his Master, of whom he says: "Whose I am and whom I serve," and perfected his great world-message which was destined to make Christianity a great world-religion.

4. HIS MESSAGE

"I am proud of the Good News, it is God's saving power for everyone who has faith, for the Jew first but for the Greek as well. God's righteousness is revealed in it arising out of faith and tending to produce faith—as it is written, 'By faith shall the righteous live.'" Thus does Paul introduce his theme in his letter to the Romans, which corresponds to Jesus' Sermon on the Mount in that it sets forth his message in fullest form.

The theme of the Sermon on the Mount is righteousness, or that conduct of life which issues in the character that makes a man acceptable to God. Jesus said, after summarizing the character of the citizens of the Kingdom, "For, I tell you, unless your righteousness excels the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees you will never get into the Kingdom of God." This also is

Paul's great theme and his message or "gospel" is in essence the same as that of Jesus, although he sometimes clothes it in rabbinical dress because of his training, or because of the arguments he is answering. By the faith through which men become acceptable to God he means the same thing as does Jesus when he says: "Whoever will not receive the Kingdom of God like a child will never get into it at all."

Like other ancient teachers, and especially like Jesus, Paul uses striking picture language to convey and illustrate his ideas. The interpretation of this language literally has given rise to theological dogmas which have covered up his real message. Jesus used very familiar figures drawn from everyday life, but Paul, because of his intense training in the Law, takes his figures from law and expresses his thought in legal terminology. To illustrate his conception of salvation or messianic deliverance from sin he uses several striking terms of this kind.

One of these terms is redemption or ransom. "All have sinned" he says, "and have failed to attain the approval of God, but are justified gratuitously by his grace through the redemption provided in Jesus Christ." This manifestly figurative language refers to the familiar custom in the Roman world of Paul's day of the emancipation of slaves. There were great numbers of slaves and many of them purchased their freedom or were "bought with a price" by some friend or bequeathed freedom by their owners. The use of this figure in this particular connection may have been suggested to Paul by Jesus' words as reported in our earliest source: "The Son of Man has not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many slaves."

In this connection it should be remembered that in Roman households in Paul's day there were two distinct classes of dependents—the children of the head of the house and the slaves. This distinction was so clearly drawn that the word for children was *liberi*, meaning "free persons." Accordingly, with Paul the terms "sons" and "free men" are synonymous. He describes men who do not have the right attitude toward God but regard him as a tyrannical taskmaster and are hostile to him, as being "under" or subject to "sin" (literally, *error*), and consequently as being "slaves," and teaches that in order to become "free" they must become "sons" of God.

Consequently, Paul means that Jesus sets men free or "redeems" them from the bondage to sin in which state they are, by reason of their legalistic conception of their relationship to God, the terrible burden of which he himself had experienced—that conception which causes them to regard God as a tyrant and taskmaster and so to fear and hate him—by showing them how to become sons and so free men. This is done through the "good news" in which Jesus teaches the father-love of God. The death of Jesus, resulting from his efforts as God's servant and representative to teach men God's true character and attitude and their consequent proper attitude to him, proves God's love for men. "The God," Paul says, "who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, surely he will give us everything besides." In view of this, they are brought to love him in return and so to become his sons. Consequently, Jesus may be said to have "redeemed us from the curse of the Law" or to have secured for us "redemption

through his blood" [i.e., his death] by bringing us from the bondage of slavery to the freedom of sonship.

Another favorite term of the apostle is justification. This figure is taken from the ancient law courts where the accused was not acquitted until the requirements of the law were satisfied by his being proved innocent or the penalty remitted because of palliating circumstances or forgiveness by the injured party. Paul says: "We are justified by faith," or in a clearer translation, "We are acquitted as a result of faith." That is to say, we are pronounced righteous or acceptable to God and accordingly acquitted not when we have a certain number of deeds of obedience to statutes to our credit but when we come to have the right attitude toward God, the attitude of faith or filial love and trust.

This attitude is brought about by the "good news" of Jesus Christ, who shows by his life and death God's love to men and so leads them in return to love him and trust him or to have faith in him. As soon as men take this attitude they become "sons of God" and so free men "in" (under the leadership of or in the domain of) Jesus Christ, and in consequence acceptable to God and acquitted of all sin, or, in other words, forgiven. That justification and forgiveness are with Paul the same thing as is seen from his statement in Romans that "a man who believes in God who justifies the ungodly has his faith counted to him for righteousness, just as David himself describes the bliss of the man who has righteousness counted to him by God apart from what he does--'Blessed are they whose breaches of the law are forgiven, whose sins are covered.'" It should be

remembered, however, that both terms are not merely negative, but positive, involving approval.

Still another term is reconciliation. Paul says:

> If while we were hostile to God we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, much more now that we are reconciled shall we be saved by his life. Not only so but we triumph in God through our Lord Jesus Christ by whom we now enjoy our reconciliation. . . . . God has reconciled us to himself through Christ and has given us the ministry of this reconciliation namely, how that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself. . . . . On Christ's behalf, therefore, we come as ambassadors; God, as it were, entreating through us, we beseech you, be reconciled to God.

Here, like the prodigal son, the sinner has wandered away from God and has the attitude of an enemy or alien. The love of Jesus as established in his death and continually exhibited in his life brings him to see the father-love of God and he comes back home. Closely allied in Paul's thought to reconciliation is the term "propitiation." He says that "God set forth Jesus in his blood [i.e., his death] as a means of propitiation through faith," meaning that the receptive, loving, and obedient attitude of faith on the part of men which is brought about by the love of God, as exhibited in Jesus' death makes it possible for God to be propitious or merciful and to accept them as sons.

It will be noticed that in all these figures Jesus is represented as the intermediary between God and man. Emancipation, justification, or acquittal and reconciliation are brought about by bringing men into the right attitude toward God—the natural attitude of children to their father. This is done through the "good news" of Jesus' life and supreme act of self-

sacrificing love in which he demonstrated and exemplified God's father-love for men. Paul speaks of the spirit of Jesus dwelling in the heart of the man who accepts his message causing him to become like Jesus, to partake of his very nature and thus to become a "son of God" and in consequence to be delivered from the bondage of sin. "For the sons of God," he says, "are those who are guided by the spirit of God. You have received no slavish spirit that would make you relapse again into fear; you have received the spirit of sonship. And when we cry Abba! Father! it is God's spirit testifying with ours that we are his children, and if children, heirs as well, heirs of God along with Christ."

Paul's message is more completely set forth in Romans than in any other of his writings. This is largely due to the fact that he had never been with them and had never preached to them before writing this letter, and in consequence he could not assume that they knew anything of "his gospel." His object in writing this letter was to set forth the principles of the free spiritual gospel which he preached in order to fortify them against Judaistic legalism which might find its way there before he came. He was well aware too of the danger before him. It was written just before his last visit to Jerusalem. He must have felt that there was a strong probability that he might meet with death at the hands of his fanatical countrymen, and so never have the opportunity of visiting Rome. He therefore took this means of giving to the Christians in the world's capital, because he considered it vital, his own conception of the true gospel, a systematic presentation and defense of a world-religion for all nations without racial conditions.

In this letter Paul's starting-point is "righteousness," by which he means that conduct of life which makes men acceptable to God and secures his favor and blessing; in other words, that which is right or good. This righteousness or way of life is "revealed in the Gospel," or "good news," which is for all men, Jews and Greeks. Through the Christ, as set forth in the "good news," God has shown all men how to secure this righteousness and so to become "righteous" or *right* in their attitude toward God. Sin is universal. All men are under condemnation. The Gentiles are guilty and the Jews as well. The former have failed to keep "the law written on their hearts," the latter, that "written on tables of stone." The Law made men conscious of sin, pointed it out, defined it. Men were attracted by it and became slaves to it. But the Law did not point the way to freedom. It showed them only that they were under condemnation.

"But now," Paul says, "We have a righteousness coming from God, disclosed apart from law altogether; it is attested by the Law and the Prophets but it is a righteousness coming from God which comes by believing in Jesus Christ. And it is meant for all who have faith. No distinction is made. All have sinned, all come short of the glory of God but in his loving kindness they are acquitted freely through the ransom provided in Christ Jesus." Paul means that Jesus in the "good news" shows the way out of the bondage of sin by teaching men God's fatherhood and showing them how to become his sons by assuming the right attitude toward him, the receptive and obedient attitude of love and trust which a normal son should have to a normal father.

As soon as they have this attitude they become God's sons, and as such they love God and so "fulfill the Law" and are "no longer in bondage to sin." They are "not subject to law but subject to grace," that is to say, to the loving favor of God.

Thus the true righteousness which makes acceptable to God is "apart from law altogether" and "comes through faith." By faith Paul does not mean mere intellectual assent but that attitude which causes a son to do his father's will gladly and spontaneously because he loves and trusts him. What he means by faith he illustrates by the case of Abraham with which the Jews were so familiar. Abraham became acceptable to God (i.e., righteous) because of his faith or filial attitude of trustful obedience before the Law was given. Those who secure this righteousness by means of their faith or filial attitude are set free from sin, law, and death. They are *in* Christ Jesus (that is to say, in his domain or sphere of influence) and are no longer under control of the flesh (lower nature) but under control of the spirit (higher nature). Christ's spirit dwells in them and they become like him, and so become "sons of God" with all the love and care and blessing that relation implies, "heirs along with Christ." "All things work together for their good." They rise above the ills of life and become "more than conquerors," never to be separated from God's love.

Paul's teaching with regard to the relationship of Christians to one another is the same in principle as the Golden Rule of Jesus. He urges modesty and moderation. He illustrates the duties of members in the Christian organization by the human body. "Just

as in the one human body we have many members and these members do not all have the same function, so too although we are many we form one body in Christ and are severally members one of another." As in the case of the members of the human body, each member of the Christian body must do diligently the task for which he is best fitted, whether it be more or less important, if there is to be an effective organization. He has no use for shallowness or insincerity. "Let your love," he says, "be a real thing."

With regard to the Christian's relation to outsiders his teaching is the same as that of Jesus—"Good for evil." "Bless those who persecute you," he says, "bless them instead of cursing them. . . . . Never pay back evil for evil to anyone; aim to be above reproach in the eyes of all. Be at peace with all men if possible, so far as it depends on you."

His teaching with regard to the relation of Christians to the state might be stated in Jesus' words: "Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar; give to God what belongs to God." Christians are to respect but not to fear the law of the state; "Magistrates," he says, "are no terror to an honest man, but to a bad man. If you want to avoid being alarmed at the government authorities, lead an honest life." It was this teaching that finally won its way to the very throne of the Roman Empire.

Thus Paul's message when divested of its rabbinical dress and modern theological dogmatism is seen to be the same as that of his Great Master. Jesus said: "All the law and the prophets are summed up in two precepts—'You must love God with all your heart and

you must love your fellow men as yourself.'" Paul says: "He who loves his fellow men has fulfilled the law." "All the commandments," he says, "are summed up in this one phrase, 'you must love your neighbor as yourself.' Love never wrongs a neighbor; that is why love is the fulfilment of the law."

Such is Paul's great message, untrammeled by forms, rites, ceremonies, or dogmas, and so a universal message for all men to bring them from slavery to sonship, "from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God."

SUPPLEMENTARY READING

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2. Ramsay, *St. Paul the Traveler and Roman Citizen*, pp. 29–46.
3. Kent, *Life and Teachings of the Apostles*, pp. 68–80, 108, 109, 162–68, 186–90, 195–200.
4. Robinson, *Life of Paul*, pp. 25–73.
5. Burton, "Saul's Experience on the Road to Damascus," *Biblical World*, January, 1893.
6. Gilbert, *Bible for Home and School*, "Acts," pp. 99–106, 123, 124, 207–10, 233–38.
7. Farrar, *Life and Work of St. Paul*, chaps. ii–iv, ix–xiii.
8. Conybeare and Howson, *Life and Epistles of St. Paul*, chaps. ii–iv.
9. Deissmann, *St. Paul*, pp. 119–24, 139–62.
10. Ramsay, "Tarsus," in Hastings, *Dictionary of the Bible*.
11. Bacon, *The Story of St. Paul*, pp. 13–67.
12. Schürer, *A History of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ*, Div. 2, Vol. I, p. 176.

CHAPTER X

THE NEW PROGRAM

HOW CHRISTIANITY WAS CARRIED OVER THE ROMAN EMPIRE

1. Galatia
   Acts 13:1—14:27; Gal. 1:1–5; 3:1–5; 4:8–20; II Cor. 11:25
2. Macedonia
   Acts 15:36—17:15; I Thess. 1:1—2:14; II Thess. 3:6–15; I Cor. 16:19; II Cor. 11:9; Rom. 16:5; Col. 4:15; Phil. 4:16
3. Achaia
   Acts 17:16—18:22; I Thess. 3:1, 2, 6, 7; I Cor. 1:4–9, 14–16, 26; 2:1–5; 3:1, 2, 6; 15:1–8; 16:5; II Cor. 11:8–10
4. Asia
   Acts 18:23—21:16; I Cor. 1:10—2:7; 3:3–8; 5:1–9; 7:1; chaps. 13, 15, 16; II Cor., chaps. 10, 13, 1, 2, 7, 8, 9, in the order cited; Rom. 1:1–17; 3:19–31; 8:14–17, 28–39; 15:14–33
5. Rome
   Acts 21:17–40; 23:12–35; 24:23, 27; 25:1–12; 27:1; 28:14–31; Phil., entire; Philem., entire; II Tim. 1:1–4; 4:6–18

1. GALATIA

Paul had now been a Christian about twelve years. He had proclaimed the message throughout his own and the neighboring province and was ready for new fields. The outcome of his missionary enterprises reveals a well-thought-out plan. In the first place, his aim was to plant churches in strategic centers of the various provinces of the Empire; in the second place, to strengthen their organization until they could stand

alone; and finally to have the surrounding regions evangelized from these centers. His plan embraced the whole Roman Empire even to its most distant province of Spain.

At a meeting of five of the leaders among the Antioch disciples it was decided that Paul and Barnabas should leave Antioch and carry the "good news" to other places. In this decision they understood, as they always did, that they were guided by the Spirit. It should be noticed that Paul and Barnabas were not set apart by the church but by three companions at a private conference. Paul does not appear to have been a missionary of the Antioch church nor to have been supported or controlled by it. He merely made Antioch his headquarters.

The first place visited was Cyprus. They "went through the whole island to Paphos," the capital and central seat of the worship of Venus, who was reputed to have been born there from the sea foam. This city, the scene of the wildest form of licentiousness, was a typical instance of the need for the purifying message of the "good news." The Roman governor, Sergius Paulus, heard of the new teachers or "philosophers" and sent for them for the purpose of hearing what they had to say—a very natural proceeding for a Roman leader in those days, for the Romans were always on their guard against anything that might create disturbance.

Here too Paul had a typical experience with a sorcerer. These sorcerers or Magi were everywhere and the Christian preachers had to meet them. They claimed to have knowledge of spirits and ability to influence men's

lives by their occult science. Many of them had some knowledge of medicine and of the science of the day, and probably performed many feats and effected cures because of their faith in the power of spirits to help them. The Christians had to convince men that the Spirit of God was all powerful and could free them from any evil influence. This magician became jealous of Paul's influence with the governor and interfered. Paul was moved to exert his mighty spiritual force and completely silenced him. We are told that "the proconsul believed and was astonished at the teaching of the Lord."

The next stop after leaving Cyprus was at Antioch of Pisidia, a city of very considerable importance, a Roman colony with special privileges. The experience of Paul and his companions here may be regarded as typical of that of the early Christian preachers. They came into the city like other travelers of whom there were many in that day. They found a lodging-place and worked at their trade until the Sabbath, when they went to the synagogue. As was the custom, they were given an opportunity to speak. "After the reading of the Law and the Prophets the president of the synagogue sent to tell them, 'Brothers, if you have any word of counsel for the people, say it,'" so Paul stood up and motioning with his hand, said: "Listen, men of Israel and you who reverence God." Paul evidently had a characteristic gesture which is often referred to as here by the words "motioning with his hand." His opening words addressed the two classes always to be found in a synagogue—Jews and the local Greeks who had come to believe in Jehovah as the one God but did not

accept the rites and ceremonies of Judaism. These usually furnished the nucleus of a new Christian community.

When Paul began, the people at once recognized the words of a trained rabbi and gave special attention. While Luke did not hear him on this occasion he heard him often later and this speech of which he records here the chief points may be regarded as typical, not only of Paul's words on such an occasion, but of the message of the first Christian preachers in general. It begins by reciting in striking outline Jewish history leading up to the promise of the Messiah and then on until at last the startling announcement is made that *the Messiah had come!* It then briefly sketches the life, death, and Resurrection of Jesus and proclaims him the Messiah. This at once produced a sensation. During the following week this synagogue address was the "talk of the town."

The next Sabbath a great crowd ("almost the whole city") assembled in which was a large number of Greeks. Paul told them that his "good news" was for the Gentiles as well as for the Jews and "the Jews were filled with jealousy. They began to contradict what Paul had said and to abuse him." Paul then "turned to the Gentiles" and many of them accepted his message and became disciples. The Jews then stirred up a riot, and Paul and his companions had to leave the city. It was the same almost everywhere. Paul was no coward, but his Master had said: "If they persecute you in one city flee to another."

The other large cities in South Galatia—Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe—were visited with similar experiences and results. In all these centers thus arose communities

of disciples similar to that in Jerusalem, which by their simplicity of worship and freedom from Jewish legalism and ceremonial rites, combined with the moral purity and monotheism of Judaism and the heart-satisfying message of Jesus, made a strong appeal to the Gentiles, soon eclipsed the synagogue, and sent out evangelists into all the surrounding country.

At Derbe Paul was near Tarsus, his old home on the main route to the east, but he turned back again to the west, revisiting Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch. This is a good example of his bravery and devotion to the churches he had established and of his method of work. The object of his second visit was to "strengthen the souls of the disciples and encourage them to hold fast to the faith." He preached in Perga, which he had to omit before on account of illness, and then sailed back to his headquarters in Antioch, thus completing what is known as his "first missionary journey." It was a long journey for that time, covering about 1,400 miles and occupying about two years, and he had met with extraordinary success.

2. MACEDONIA

After having "spent considerable time with the disciples" at Antioch, Paul, accompanied this time by Silas, a leading man of the Jerusalem church, started off again and "made his way through Syria and Cilicia strengthening the churches" which had been founded during the seven years before he came to Antioch. This is another example of the second element in Paul's plan of campaign. It was not sufficient to plant the gospel. He felt that strong communities must be established to carry on the work in surrounding regions.

After revisiting the churches in Galatia and picking up at Lystra a young Jewish convert to take with him as an assistant, it seems from the account in Acts that he had in mind as on the first journey to go to Ephesus. He would naturally start from Pisidian Antioch, the farthest west of his established churches, but he was led to understand that it was not the will of God that he should go to Ephesus at this time, so he went down to the old seaport of Troas, crossed over to Europe, and made his first stop at Philippi, "the foremost city of the district of Macedonia."

The important part women were to play in Christianity was illustrated by the fact that the first two converts in Europe were women. These were of two very different types. The first was a Greek proselyte named Lydia, a business woman from Thyatira in Asia. She was evidently well-to-do as she had a store and a residence in Philippi. When she was converted she offered her house as headquarters for Paul and his companions and they remained with her during their stay at Philippi, probably for several months. This is an example of the custom of the early disciples of meeting in private houses belonging to well-to-do members, to which Paul refers in his letters in the phrase "the church in the house."

The second woman was a "slave girl possessed with a spirit of ventriloquism, a source of great profit to her owners by her power of fortune-telling." She was probably very intelligent and believed that she was controlled by a spirit. Her active mind grasped the truth of Paul's message, and she followed him, calling out her belief. When Paul's tone of authority restored

her to a normal condition of mind, she could no longer believe in her magical powers, and in consequence quit her fortune-telling and ventriloquism. This is another example, similar to that of the magician in Cyprus, of the superstitions that the early Christian preachers had to meet. Of course, the girl's owners were enraged. "They caught hold of Paul and Silas and dragged them before the magistrates in the Forum." This was the first attack from a gentile source. The opposition usually came from the Jews.

The charge was that Paul and his companions were teaching customs unlawful for Romans to follow. The unlawful teaching was probably that Jesus was a king (messiah)—an intentional misrepresentation on the part of the Jews. As the mob rushed on them there was no chance to defend themselves and it would probably have been useless for Paul to appeal to his Roman citizenship because they would not listen. The magistrates without trial ordered Paul and Silas to be beaten with rods and thrown into prison. Paul's character is exhibited in the prison scene at midnight in prayer and singing. An earthquake occurred as frequently happened there and the prisoners were released. Paul was master of the situation and the jailer was converted. In the meantime Timothy and Luke had probably gotten the ear of the magistrates to tell them of Paul's Roman citizenship and these officials came to release Paul and Silas and to ask them to leave town. This they did in a dignified manner after bidding the converts farewell at a meeting in Lydia's house.

They passed through two large cities, Amphipolis and Apollonia, probably because there was no synagogue

in them, and stopped in Thessalonica, the metropolis of Macedonia, in our time called Saloniki, and well known during the World War. Here Paul probably stayed several months and had great success. In his letter to them he speaks of working at his trade and of his upright life among them. As usual the Jews finally raised a riot. The content of the charge was: "These upsetters of the world have come here too. They all violate the decrees of Caesar by calling someone else named Jesus a king." These two items were undoubtedly those of the usual Jewish accusation—disturbing the peace and treason. These were the charges most likely to gain an ear from the Roman magistrates everywhere. Rome was very jealous of her authority.

Paul and Silas having learned from experience sought safety in hiding and when night came escaped to another Macedonian town called Berea, where they were well received and had rest and success for a considerable time, until Jews from Thessalonica came and stirred up a riot as usual and Paul had to leave the province.

The campaign in Macedonia had been very successful. Philippi remained the most faithful of all his churches. Twice to Thessalonica and again to Corinth they sent him money. When he was in prison in Rome, they sent him a generous gift which called forth from him the tender epistle known as "Paul's Love Letter." In Macedonia Paul proved that the gospel was adapted to the Greek world. It was now fully launched on its way to become a great world-religion. Here too he realized his ambition to make the communities he

established evangelistic centers. Paul wrote shortly afterward to the church at Thessalonica: "The word of the Lord has resounded from you throughout Macedonia and Achaia."

3. ACHAIA

On leaving Macedonia Paul probably had in mind as his next objective Corinth, the capital of the province and the meeting place of travel and trade between East and West, but he stopped at Athens to wait for Silas and Timothy and "his soul was irritated at the sight of idols that filled the city." He could not refrain from proclaiming his message and soon became an object of curious attention in the market place, as in the case of Socrates three hundred years before. As a new lecturer, he was given opportunity to present his views before the court of Areopagus to determine whether he should be given the freedom of the Agora. His audience was composed not only of philosophers but of Athenian people generally.

Paul's speech on this occasion as reported in Acts, may be briefly summarized as follows: God who made the world is Lord of Heaven and of earth, and, as some Greek poets teach, all men are his children. He is not to be worshiped in various forms by means of images of human device. He overlooked the weakness of men in times past but now asks all men to repent and prepare for judgment. This brought him to "Jesus and the Resurrection" and they would not hear him further but ridiculed the idea of "a resurrection of dead men." The Acts account of the Athens visit is lifelike and vivid. Paul became an Athenian to the Athenians. His

introduction on "the unknown god" was felicitous and he appealed to the pride of the Athenians in his remark that they were "uncommonly religious."

Paul evidently did not stay long in Athens but went on to his real objective, Corinth, the metropolis of Achaia, wealthy and cultured and infamous for vice—the Paris of the ancient world. As he would need some time to accomplish anything in such a city, he had to work at his trade. He was very fortunate in finding work with "a Jew, a native of Pontus, who had recently arrived from Italy with his wife Priscilla, as Claudius had ordered all Jews to leave Rome." The expulsion here referred to was in 49 A.D., so this would give about 50 A.D. as the date of Paul's arrival in Corinth. Aquila and Priscilla probably were Christians before Paul met them. He never refers to them as his converts and we know that there were communities of Christians in Rome at this time.

Although the difficulties in the way of his gospel in such a city as Corinth must have seemed almost insurmountable, he had remarkable success. "Crispus, the president of the synagogue, believed in the Lord as did all his household, and many Corinthians believed and were baptized. So he settled there for a year and six months, teaching them the word of God." The converts were mostly Greeks and largely from the lower class -"not many leading men, not many men of good birth." But there were some prominent men and women; for example, Erastus, the city treasurer, and Chloe and Stephanas, who had "households."

After his experience at Athens he "determined to be ignorant of everything except Jesus Christ and Jesus

Christ crucified." He decided not to use "elaborate words of philosophy." He wrote to the Corinthian Christians afterward: "Jews demand miracles and Greeks want wisdom, but our message is Christ the crucified—'a stumbling block to the Jews,' 'sheer folly' to the Greeks but for those who are called, whether Jews or Greeks, a Christ who is the power of God and the wisdom of God."

During this period he received news from Thessalonica which, while very good, showed that the disciples there were exposed to persecution and some were grieved over the loss of friends who had died before the second coming of the Lord. He wrote the first of his letters that we have (I Thessalonians) and sent it by Timothy to encourage them and to comfort them in respect to those of their number who had died. A few months later, having heard that some had mistaken his first letter as teaching the immediate coming of the Lord and were idle and disorderly, he wrote another letter, our "II Thessalonians," rebuking their idleness and urging calmness and industry. These letters indicate his constant care for the churches he had established.

At last the Jews raised the usual demonstration against Paul and accused him before the Roman proconsul of Achaia, Gallio, brother of the famous Seneca, the date of whose consulship has been determined from an inscription published in April, 1908, in the *Report of the Palestine Exploration Fund*, as 51–52 A.D. Gallio's attitude was typical of that of the Roman government. He refused to listen to what he looked upon as a private Jewish quarrel, and he "drove them from the tribunal." The attitude of the Greeks is seen from the fact that

"they caught hold of Sosthenes, president of the synagogue, and beat him in front of the tribunal."

Some time after this Paul sailed back to his headquarters in Antioch of Syria, accompanied as far as Ephesus by Aquila and Priscilla. This stay in Corinth was his most important success, a triumph over immorality, materialism, luxury, and vice. It was a signal victory in the conquest of the Roman world. Because of its position as a meeting-point of East and West, Corinth was a strategic center for the spread of the "good news" over the Roman world. The journey covered some twenty-five hundred miles and occupied about two and a half years (49–51 A.D.)

4. ASIA

"After spending some time" again in Antioch, his headquarters, Paul "set out on a journey through the Galatian country and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples." Since he had been in Galatia disquieting news had come to him of the churches there having been visited by disciples from Jerusalem, who had tried to convince them that they must become Jews in order to secure messianic deliverance or salvation. He had written them a very strong letter (Galatians) to counteract this propaganda, which will be discussed in the next chapter, and now took the first opportunity to visit them in person. At this time, too, he probably instructed them about the "collection," a large sum of money he was raising from the gentile churches for the poor at Jerusalem in the hope of establishing better relations between the Jewish and gentile wings of the new movement.

After visiting these churches he went to Ephesus, which he probably had in mind on his first and second journeys as the most strategic center in the East. It was the capital of Asia, the most wealthy and populous of the Roman provinces. After having delivered his message in Greece he would probably have gone directly to Rome had it not been for this gap in the East. Ephesus for centuries before this time had been the chief city in Asia Minor. While Tarsus was the intellectual center, Ephesus was the religious and commercial center, famous for its great temple of Artemis, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, a temple, art museum, bank, and asylum, all in one, the repository of the great image of Artemis which was believed to have fallen from Heaven.

An example is noted here by Luke of how Christianity was carried over the Empire by others than Paul. Soon after the arrival at Ephesus of Aquila and Priscilla, to whom reference has been made above, they heard speaking in the synagogue "a Jew called Apollos, who was a native of Alexandria, a man of culture, strong in his knowledge of the Scriptures." He was very eloquent and surprised them by preaching "about Jesus," but his knowledge of the new movement was imperfect. He was probably a missionary of the sect of John the Baptist, which seems to have maintained an existence independent of Christianity for several centuries. They "took him home with them and explained more accurately to him what the way of God really meant." When Apollos heard of the large church that had been established in Corinth he went over there and was very successful, "for he publicly refuted the Jews with might

and main showing from the Scriptures that the Messiah was Jesus." Paul afterward wrote of his work: "I planted, Apollos watered."

Paul continued his work in Ephesus longer than in any other city. He taught for three months in the synagogue, and when strong opposition developed on the part of the Jews "he left them, withdrew the disciples and continued his argument every day from eleven to four in the lecture-room of Tyrannus. This went on for two years so that all the inhabitants of Asia, Jews as well as Greeks, heard the word of the Lord."

The manner in which his message was carried over this province, which was about the size of New England, is typical of such work in all places he visited and may be summarized as follows: (1) People visiting Ephesus and hearing Paul preach would carry the message back to their homes. As Ephesus was the religious and commercial center of the province with a world-famous temple and amphitheatre, people came there from all over the province to worship the famous goddess, to attend the games, or to transact business. Philemon, a wealthy citizen of Colossae, was one of Paul's converts although Paul had never been in Colossae. (2) Paul's converts would go out from the city all over the province as evangelists. Epaphras, one of these, was the pastor and probable founder of the church in Colossae.

We learn from Acts how Paul was supported during this time and we may understand that the method was the same everywhere. By work at his trade he not only supported himself but contributed to the support of his companions. This gives us some idea of his great activity, ability, and energy. His work, however, was

by no means uninterrupted. When writing to the Corinthians he mentions two occasions on which his life was in danger, once when "he fought with wild beasts" and again when "he despaired of life." He speaks too of having been "in jeopardy every hour" and of there not being a day when he was not "at death's door," of his "many adversaries" and his "sufferings."

We have also, in the indications in his letters of his communication with Corinth, a good example of how his "care of all the churches" he had previously established was constantly upon him:

1. He received bad news from Corinth regarding immorality in the church, which was very natural for such a place, for they had not regarded such conduct as reprehensible before he came to them. In consequence, he wrote them a letter which has not been preserved, except probably a brief fragment now to be found interpolated into our II Corinthians (6:14—7:1), telling them "not to associate with the immoral."

2. They wrote to him a reply complaining that if they should follow this instruction they "would have to leave the world altogether" (an interesting comment on their city), and asking him certain questions about marriage, eating meat that had been offered to idols, public worship, spiritual gifts, and the Resurrection.

3. Servants of Chloe, a prominent member of the church at Corinth, brought him bad news of the existence of four parties in the church.

4. Paul then wrote them a second letter, which is preserved as our I Corinthians, to condemn the immoral, rebuke the party-spirit, and answer their

questions. This letter was not well received. A man who was severely rebuked and sentenced rebelled against Paul's authority and openly insulted him. The news was brought back to Paul, probably by Timothy, who had been sent to Corinth by Paul to exhort the church personally and failed to accomplish his purpose.

5. Paul then wrote a third letter, very severe in tone, which he sent by Titus, an older and more experienced helper than Timothy, who should exhort them personally and try to win them back. This is preserved in our II Corinthians, chapters 10–13.

Paul's work at Ephesus was finally stopped by a riot. His preaching had had such an effect that the trade of the silversmiths suffered. These men were engaged in the lucrative business of making shrines of Artemis. Their leader, Demetrius, a large employer of labor, called the tradesmen together and stirred them to frenzy by a speech on the danger of losing their jobs. A mob of about twenty-five thousand filled the theater, having seized Gaius and Aristarchus, two of Paul's helpers. Paul wanted to go in and speak to them but some friendly Roman officials held him back. Demetrius lost control and the mob went wild, most of them not knowing what it was all about. They began to cry out against the Jews who put forward their leading man of the same trade to defend them. The mob drowned out his voice with a great chant in honor of their goddess: "Great is Artemis of Ephesus."

After two hours they were so exhausted that the "secretary of state" quieted them in a sensible speech, telling them that Artemis was too great to be injured by anyone; no charge had been brought against Gaius

and Aristarchus; Demetrius and his people should appeal to the courts if they had a grievance; and that there was danger of their being called to account by Rome for disturbing the peace. The crowd dispersed and Paul soon afterward left Ephesus of his own accord probably because he saw that his further presence there would create more disturbance and hinder his cause.

Paul now considered that his work in the East was finished and he intended to go to Rome as soon as he could get the great "collection" ready and take it to Jerusalem. In order to complete this task he had yet to visit the churches in the provinces of Macedonia and Achaia. He met Titus in Macedonia on his way back from Corinth with the good news that the church had returned to its allegiance. He then wrote a fourth letter, our II Corinthians, chapters 1–9 (excluding the brief fragment referred to above), a letter "overflowing with joy and thankfulness." He visited the churches in Macedonia and Achaia, "with much exhortation," got together the "collection," and spent some time in Corinth. From this city he wrote the letter to the Romans about 56 A.D. in order to set before the Christians in the world's capital his pure gospel and to fortify them against Jewish legalism for fear he might never get there in person. Shortly after this, accompanied by seven delegates appointed by the various gentile churches of the provinces of Macedonia, Achaia, Asia, and Galatia to bear the "collection," he journeyed back to Jerusalem.

5. ROME

While Luke says: "The brothers welcomed us gladly on our arrival in Jerusalem," he probably refers

only to a small group of the leaders gathered to meet the delegates. The indications all point to the conclusion that the contribution failed in its purpose of reconciling the Jewish to the gentile disciples. The Jews were noted for ingratitude. Instead of thanking Paul they told him of evil reports about him and asked him to disprove them.

As he arrived at Pentecost the city was crowded with Jews from all over the Empire. After a few days some of his enemies from Ephesus recognized him in the Temple. Their hatred was intense. This was their opportunity. "They laid hands on him and shouted: Men of Israel, help! help! Here is the man who teaches everyone everywhere against our people, the Law and this Place! And he has actually brought Greeks inside the Temple and defiled this holy Place." A mob quickly gathered and Paul would have been torn to pieces had he not been rescued by the Roman garrison. He was arrested as a disturber of the peace and sent to the Roman governor at Caesarea, where he was kept in prison for two years. He then exercised his right of appeal to the emperor and in this way realized his long-cherished ambition of visiting Rome.

Here in the world's capital "for two full years he remained in his own private lodging, welcoming any who came to visit him, he preached the Kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ quite openly and undisturbed." He was bound by a chain to a soldier—his right hand to the soldier's left, as was the custom, the soldier being responsible for his prisoner with his life. He preached all the time boldly, with great success, to all who came to him so that he could say that his

imprisonment had "tended to advance the gospel" and that the fact of its being for the sake of Christ was "recognized throughout the whole of the praetorian guard and everywhere else."

During this time he had constant communication with the churches he had established throughout the Empire. He wrote to the Philippians a beautiful "love letter" of thankfulness for a gift they had sent him; to the Colossians he wrote to correct some false doctrines of which he had heard; a circular letter to the churches of Asia on similar topics, which has come to us under the name of "Ephesians"; and a tender little personal letter to Philemon, a leading member of the church in Colossae.

We do not know the cause of the two years' delay of his trial, but it would give his enemies time to collect evidence against him and bring witnesses from Jerusalem. The main charge was in all probability that of being an agitator and raising disturbances among the people, that which would most likely gain the ear of Rome and which his enemies could make most show of substantiating. Although he at first had hopes of release, after a preliminary trial he was consigned to a much severer imprisonment, and wrote to his disciple Timothy that he expected soon to be put to death: "My time to go has come; I have fought the good fight; I have run my course; I have kept the faith." Although his last campaign had not turned out as he had planned, perhaps his gospel radiated even more effectively from his imprisonment, trial, and martyrdom, and he realized his ambition of planting the gospel in all the strategic centers of the Empire.

Thus was the "good news" carried over the civilized world of that day by Paul and by other missionaries of whose work we have no definite record. An attempt has been made to give the plan of campaign and some illustrative incidents. Paul was the predominant messenger and his work may be taken as typical of that of the other preachers of the first century.

SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS

1. McGiffert, *A History of Christianity in the Apostolic Age*, pp. 172–92, 226–423.
2. Ramsay, *St. Paul the Traveller*, pp. 178–362.
3. Robinson, *Life of Paul*, pp. 74–92, 111–220.
4. Kent, *Work and Teachings of the Apostles*, pp. 86–90, 104–19, 135–42, 151–55, 173–79, 205–9, 216–23.
5. Bacon, *Story of St. Paul*, pp. 147–226.
6. Gilbert, *Bible for Home and School*, "Acts," pp. 131–258.
7. Conybeare and Howson, *Life and Epistles of St. Paul*, chaps. v–xxvii, *passim*.
8. Farrar, *The Life and Work of St. Paul*, chaps. xix–xxviii, xxxi, xxxiv, xl–xlv, lvii.
9. Weizsäcker, *The Apostolic Age of the Christian Church*, I, 252–405.

CHAPTER XI

THE NEW CONFLICT

HOW THE JEWISH LEGALISTS RECEIVED PAUL'S MESSAGE

1. The Judaizers
   Gal. 1:6, 7; 2:4; 3:7, 9, 14; 4:10, 21–31; 5:2, 4, 11; 6:12, Acts 15:1, 23, 24; Matt. 5:17, 18
2. The Jerusalem Conference
   Gal. 2:1–10; Acts 15:1–32
3. The Antioch Crisis
   Gal. 2:11–21
4. The Galatian Defection
   Gal., entire; I Cor. 16:1; Acts 20:4; Rom. 15:23
5. The Corinthian Revolt
   I Cor. 1:12; II Cor., chaps. 10–13, especially 11:4, 5, 12, 13, 22, 23; 12:11–13, 16; 4:2; 7:2–16; cf. Phil. 1:15–18

A very significant result of the new program that has just been described has been purposely left for separate consideration because of its vital importance to the understanding of the rise of Christianity and also because it needs a separate treatment in order to give it true perspective. Just as the message of Jesus was received with bitter jealousy and hostility by the pharisaic legalists, so was Paul's message received by men of the same type who accepted Jesus as Messiah. It is therefore now necessary to give attention to this great conflict arising from within that threatened to destroy the essential character of Christianity at its very inception.

1. THE JUDAIZERS

"Unless you become Jews according to the custom of Moses you cannot be saved." These words of "certain

individuals who had come down from Jerusalem," addressed to the Greek disciples at Antioch, sounded the battle cry of the opposition of the Jewish Christian legalists against Paul's message to the Gentiles. The cause of this opposition was the same as in the case of Jesus—the inevitable struggle between the legalistic and the spiritual conceptions of religion. As in the case of Jesus, Paul's message was diametrically opposed to that of these pharisaic legalists. There was no room for both points of view, and one or the other had to give away. It was, as it always is, a battle to the death. Paul calls these people "false brothers" in his letter to the Galatians, but they are usually known as "Judaizers" from the word he used when censuring Peter for yielding to them on the occasion of a visit to Antioch, the word "Judaize" meaning to conform to Jewish practices.

These people taught that a person who desired to become a Christian must first become a Jew by submitting to the distinctive Jewish rites, especially that of circumcision. In other words, they taught that Christianity was a movement within Judaism, and consequently in order to get into it one must enter through the door of Judaism. Their arguments were based on the Old Testament writings which were the only "Scriptures" at that time for Christians as well as for Jews. The promises were made to Abraham and his descendants and conditioned on circumcision, and in consequence messianic deliverance or salvation was only for Abraham's children either by blood or by adoption. If, therefore, a Gentile would secure salvation he must become a son of Abraham by adoption which was

accomplished by submitting to circumcision and observing the ceremonies of the Mosaic Law.

The Judaizers accepted Jesus as the Messiah but held that he had not interfered with Judaism. They were sincere in their opposition to Paul, believing that his course would destroy the religion "once for all delivered" to their fathers. The great Temple and the synagogue worship would ultimately be forsaken and Judaism would be no more. The only thing to do was to compel everyone who desired to become a Christian to accept circumcision and first become a Jew.

There were apparently good arguments which they could use for their contention and that they made good use of them is seen from Paul's rebuttal in his letters to the Galatian and the Corinthian churches. They could cite passages from the Scriptures showing that "the promise" of messianic deliverance was only for Abraham and his seed and conditioned on the acceptance of circumcision as a perpetual rite for all who were to be included in "the Covenant" which God made with Abraham. They could say that Jesus had never abrogated the Law, but on the contrary had spoken words that seemed to involve its perpetual observance: "Do not imagine that I have come to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I tell you truly till heaven and earth pass away not a letter or a comma will pass from the Law until it is all in force." They could say that Jesus himself was a Jew, was circumcised, and kept the Law of Moses. They could point to the fact that the apostles at Jerusalem were all Jews and were now observing all the rites and ceremonies of the Mosaic ritual.

2. THE JERUSALEM CONFERENCE

When Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch from their evangelizing expedition in the province of Galatia, "they gathered the church together and reported how God had been with them, what he had done, and how he had opened a door of faith for the Gentiles." News of this report would be carried to the church at Jerusalem where the strict pharisaic party would be especially interested and suspicious of the part of it referring to the reception of large numbers of Gentiles without their first becoming Jews. It is very probable that Jews from Pisidian Antioch had been to the Passovers in Jerusalem during the past two years and had reported the clash that had occurred there between Paul and the synagogue. It was probably then in no friendly spirit that "certain individuals came down from Jerusalem to Antioch and taught the brothers, 'Unless you are circumcised after the custom of Moses you cannot be saved.'" At any rate, Paul and Barnabas went up to Jerusalem "to see the apostles and presbyters about this question."

The meeting at Jerusalem was not a "council" in the formal, ecclesiastical sense, as it has often been called. It was merely a conference between the older and younger churches. The Antioch church was not summoned before the Jerusalem church but took the initiative itself. In fact, the initiative was taken by Paul individually. He says: "It was in consequence of a revelation that I went up at all." He evidently understood that it was in accordance with the will of God that he should have a conference with the older apostles at Jerusalem and secure their approval and good-will for his gentile

missions. This would prove an effective weapon against the propaganda of his legalistic opponents.

In his own account in his letter to the "churches of Galatia," Paul gives the details of what was to him the most important meeting, a private conference with the "authorities." Here we have first-hand information, written not more than two or three years after the conference took place. In company with Barnabas and a prominent Greek convert named Titus, he went up to Jerusalem and explained privately to the leaders of the church the message he had been preaching to the Gentiles.

The question at issue was whether the Old Testament law was binding on all Christians. In particular, must gentile Christians be circumcised and keep the Law of Moses; in other words, must they enter Christianity through the door of Judaism? Some representatives of the Judaizing element of the church were present at this conference. Paul refers to them as "traitorous, false brothers," and says they "stole their way in to spy out the freedom (from the Law) which we enjoy in Christ Jesus that they might enslave us again." Titus became the special point of attack. The Judaizers urged that he should become a Jew by submitting to circumcision. At first the leaders were inclined to yield and tried to persuade Paul on the ground that it would be in the interests of harmony and would satisfy the Judaizers and do no harm. Paul, however, saw that the whole principle of the Christian's freedom from the Jewish law was involved; that it was not merely a local but a universal issue and that "the truth of the gospel" was at stake. So "he refused to yield for a single instant to their claims."

Paul's argument was based on the fact of God's approval of his gospel of freedom from the Law as shown by the lives of the gentile converts of whom Titus was a present example. They had "received the spirit not by doing what the Law commands but by having faith in the gospel message." "When," says Paul, "the so-called 'pillars' of the church, James and Cephas and John, recognized the favor of God that had been bestowed on me (that is to say God's approval of my work among the Gentiles) they gave Barnabas and me the right hand of fellowship." Further dispute was to be avoided by a division of the field. "Our sphere," Paul says, "was to be the Gentiles, theirs the Jews." Thus Paul completely won the recognition of the "pillar" apostles for his work among the Gentiles and they laid no restrictions upon him, "made no additions" to his gospel. All they asked of him was that he should "remember the poor," and Paul says: "I was quite eager to do that myself."

The Acts account of the conference refers to the chief argument of Paul in saying that at the meeting of the apostles and presbyters they "listened to Barnabas and Paul recounting the signs and wonders God had performed by them among the Gentiles." It refers also to a public meeting afterward of "the apostles and presbyters together with the whole church" at which the decision of the leaders seems to have been approved.

3. THE ANTIOCH CRISIS

The Jerusalem conference did not settle all the questions likely to arise from the conversion of the Gentiles to Christianity. It dealt only with the main question

of whether the gentile converts must become Jews. Another problem scarcely less important to the early Christians soon arose—that of the social relations of Jewish and gentile disciples. Their traditions forbade the Jews from associating with other people. They believed that to eat with Gentiles involving the eating of "unclean food" made them ceremonially unclean. The Jewish Christians outside of Palestine of course found this restriction very inconvenient, and this was especially true when large numbers of Gentiles became disciples. As soon as it became recognized that the restrictions of the Mosaic Law were not binding on the gentile Christians, the question naturally arose as to whether they were binding on their Jewish brethren. If they were not essential to messianic salvation in the one case, why should they be essential in the other?

When Peter came to pay a visit to the church in Antioch some time after the Jerusalem conference, he found that the Jewish and gentile disciples had solved the question in a manner satisfactory to themselves, and were visiting one another and eating freely together. It was a very natural thing for the impetuous, kind-hearted apostle who had seen his Master eat with "publicans and sinners" to fall in with the Antioch custom. This was Paul's territory and he probably felt that the regulation of the social relations of Jewish and gentile converts here should be left to Paul. With Peter it was now a mere matter of expediency.

The Jewish legalists, while they had been compelled to submit to the majority ruling of the Jerusalem church in recognizing the release of the Gentiles from the exactions of the Mosaic Law, by no means considered

that this meant the release of the Jews also. When they heard that Peter was mingling freely with the gentile Christians and eating with them, they sent a delegation to remonstrate with him and "when they arrived he drew back and held aloof because he was afraid of the circumcision party." Peter was in a dilemma when the Judaizers came. If he continued eating with Gentiles he would separate himself from his brethren at Jerusalem; if he did not he would offend the gentile Christians in Antioch. It was natural for him, since he regarded it as a question of expediency to keep in with the Jerusalem people so as not to lose his influence in his own field, and his example was followed by all the other Jews including even Barnabas.

Paul saw that it was no time to temporize. There was danger of losing all that had been gained. If Peter's action should go unchallenged it would "compel the Gentiles to become Jews" in order to have fellowship with the great "pillar" apostles, and in consequence would base salvation on "works of law" instead of upon faith in Jesus Christ. He publicly rebuked Peter before the whole church, telling him that he was acting a part in which he did not believe since after having acted as if the Law were not binding even on Jews he was now acting as if it must be observed even by Gentiles. He probably thought that Peter was violating the agreement reached at Jerusalem by entering his field and by example preaching circumcision to his gentile converts. The rebuke was evidently effective. It would be in accordance with Peter's character to acknowledge his error and return to his own field. Paul again saved the day for gentile Christianity.

4. THE GALATIAN DEFECTION

"I am astonished that you are so readily deserting him who called you by his grace and going over to a different gospel which is not really another gospel, for there is no other, but it means that there are some persons who are unsettling you and trying to distort the gospel of Christ." Thus Paul refers to the Jewish legalists who had "cut in on his rear" in the Galatian churches. While they had been defeated at Jerusalem and again at Antioch, they had by no means been convinced or even silenced. They had conceived a deadly hatred for Paul, and, as is always the case with people of the static and legalistic type of religion, they thought that whatever was contrary to their views was pernicious and utterly subversive of their ancestral faith, and that they would be doing God service in destroying it. They determined by all means to stop the progress of Paul's "gospel," and they decided that the most effective way was to go into his gentile mission field claiming to represent the original gospel from Jerusalem. During his long absence in Europe on the second missionary journey, they found their way to the churches of Galatia - Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe.

Pisidian Antioch was good ground for such an attack because of the rupture there between Paul and the synagogue, and the consequent strong Jewish opposition to Paul. The Judaizers began their attack by denying the apostolic authority of Paul and representing him as a man who knew nothing about Christianity except what he had gotten from the real apostles at Jerusalem, and that he had perverted this to suit his own interests.

They asserted that he was trying to "please men" or gain popularity and incidently large "collections" by preaching a gospel free from the Mosaic Law. They accused him of insincerity and inconsistency, saying that at times he preached and practiced circumcision as in the case of Titus, and at other times condemned it when it did not suit his interests. In consequence, they claimed that Paul was an enemy of the Galatians seeking to deceive them for selfish glory and aggrandizement.

This legalistic campaign among Paul's gentile converts seems to have made a great impression on them. The Galatians were "readily changing" from Paul's gospel. They were observing Jewish festivals. Some of them had probably accepted circumcision or were upon the point of so doing. The reasons for the success of the legalistic teaching are not difficult to surmise. (1) Religion based on legal requirements, formal rites, ceremonies and sacrifices was similar to the old pagan worship of the Galatians and more easily understood than Paul's spiritual conception of Christianity, which is still too lofty for many people. (2) The position of the legalists seemed to accord with the teaching of Jesus and the practice of the apostles at Jerusalem. (3) The loyalty of the legalists to the letter of the Scriptures was a strong point in their favor. They had a "Thus saith the Lord" for all their contentions. Paul also claimed to stand upon the Scriptures, but his position was not so plain. Literalism is always easy to the unthinking mind.

To the fact that Paul could not go at once in person to Galatia when he heard this disturbing news, we are

indebted for one of his strongest letters, which has well been called his "thunderbolt," and his "charter of religious freedom," the letter to the Galatians. In this letter he maintained his apostolic authority and his independence of the Jerusalem apostles, reminded the Galatian disciples of how he had "pictured Jesus Christ the Crucified before their very eyes," and that their genuine Christian experience and assurance of God's favor had come to them "not by doing what the Law commands but by having faith in the gospel message," answered the arguments of the Judaizers, and earnestly called the Galatians back to the pure gospel of freedom from the Jewish law. He claimed that the Judaizers had perverted the gospel with the motive of avoiding persecution, and that if anyone accepted circumcision he would be under obligation to keep the whole Law and would be completely "severed from Christ," or, in other words, would not be a Christian at all but only a Jew.

Paul's "thunderbolt" evidently had the desired effect. The Galatians repudiated the false teaching and returned to their allegiance. Some time after writing the letter he visited them again on his way to Ephesus, on his third missionary journey, when, as Luke tells us, he "went through the Galatian region and Phrygia, strengthening the disciples," and, as he himself tells us in the first letter to the Corinthians, he "made arrangements for the churches of Galatia in regard to the collection for the saints" at Jerusalem. Gaius of Derbe was one of the delegates appointed by the Galatian churches to carry their gift to Jerusalem several years afterward. When Paul wrote to the Romans about 56 A.D. he referred to his work in the East as

having been finished, which he could not have done if the churches of Galatia were still in the state of defection.

5. THE CORINTHIAN REVOLT

"'Apostles,' do they call themselves? They are counterfeit apostles, dishonest workmen, masquerading as 'apostles of Christ.' No wonder they do, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. So it is no surprise if his ministers also masquerade as ministers of righteousness. Their doom will answer to their deeds." So does Paul characterize the Jewish legalists who tried to undermine his work in Europe. During his three years' stay in Ephesus some Judaizers took the opportunity of following up his work in Corinth. As we have noticed, this was a strategic center, the meeting place of trade between East and West. If they could have succeeded in seducing this church from Paul they would have largely undone his work in Europe and sowed the seed of revolt in the whole Empire.

They did not at first attempt here to get the Gentiles to submit to circumcision, knowing that they could have no success in such a highly cultured community. The Greeks would regard the rite with contempt. The method of approach was to discredit Paul in order to destroy his work, of which they were intensely jealous as being a dangerous rival of Judaism. They probably hoped, too, that some of Paul's converts, when they should give up his gospel would accept their point of view.

These men brought with them letters of introduction probably from some of the leaders in Jerusalem, and called themselves "apostles of Christ" on the ground

that they had "seen the Lord" during his ministry and in consequence could claim to have received a commission directly from him. They claimed that Paul was not an apostle because he had not had this privilege, or at the most he was only a second-hand apostle, having received his gospel from the real apostles at Jerusalem. They said Paul practically admitted his lack of authority by not accepting pay for his services, and by the fact that when he was with the church in person he was very meek and only when at a safe distance claimed authority in his letters.

These "counterfeit apostles" succeeded in creating painful discord in the Corinthian church and formed a strong party, calling themselves adherents of Christ in opposition to those who remained faithful to Paul. They evidently joined hands with some who were enemies to Paul because he had written a letter rebuking them for immorality. At any rate, the situation became so grave that it ended in an open break with Paul on the part of the church and a revolt against his leadership. He sent Timothy from Ephesus to remonstrate with them, but they evidently "despised his youth" and refused to listen to him. One man, probably the one most severely rebuked in the letter, openly insulted Paul. It was a serious revolt and threatened to destroy all the work Paul had accomplished.

When this news was carried to Paul, probably by Timothy, he wrote to the church the exceedingly severe letter referred to above (chapter x), condemning the "counterfeit apostles" and calling the church back to its first love. This letter, which is preserved in part at least as the last four chapters of our II Corinthians, was so

severe that for some time after it was dispatched he "regretted" having written it. He sent it from Ephesus by Titus, an older and more experienced helper than Timothy, who was to exhort the church in person and try to win it back to the true gospel. Titus was at length successful. The church received his message, repudiated the false leaders, and returned to its allegiance with enthusiasm. Paul was greatly encouraged and wrote them the letter "overflowing with joy and thanksgiving" which has been preserved in our II Corinthians, chapters 1–9.

Thus the Jewish legalists were again defeated, and Paul seems to have gained such an ascendancy over them that after this time their efforts were only sporadic and comparatively harmless. When he wrote the letter to the Romans just before leaving for his last journey to Jerusalem he no doubt had it in mind to fortify the Christians in the world's capital against a possible attack from the Judaizers by setting forth at length his own pure gospel of "freedom in Christ Jesus." At this time, too, as has been noticed, he referred to his work in the East as finished, a clear intimation that the Judaizing propaganda had been defeated. It thus seems evident that his spiritual message, backed by his vigorous personality and powerful logic, and especially by his devoted life, gained the ascendancy in every part of the field. Afterward when in prison in Rome, some of the Judaizers were active against him, but the victory had already been won in favor of the gospel of freedom. If this had not been the case Christianity would have remained a Jewish sect with little or no influence upon the world.

SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS

1. Robinson, *Life of Paul*, pp. 93–110, 167, 168.
2. Dobschütz, *Christian Life in the Primitive Church*, pp. 160–67.
3. Weizsäcker, *Apostolic Age*, I, 257–70, 349–59.
4. Kent, *Work and Teachings of the Apostles*, pp. 91–99, 154–55.
5. Ramsay, *St. Paul the Traveller*, pp. 152–74, 178–93.
6. McGiffert, *Apostolic Age*, pp. 192–225, 310–21.
7. Bacon, *Story of St. Paul*, pp. 107–46, 172–76, 283–89.
8. Conybeare and Howson, *Life and Epistles of St. Paul*, chap. vii.
9. Farrar, *Life and Work of St. Paul*, chaps. xxii, xxiii, xxxiii.

CHAPTER XII

THE VICTORY

HOW CHRISTIANITY BECAME A WORLD-RELIGION

1. The Destruction of Jerusalem

   Mark 13:1–31; Matt. 24:1–35; Luke 21:5–33; Jos. *Wars* Books v, vi; Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* iii. 5, 6

2. Records of the "Good News"

   Luke 1:1–4; Acts 1:21, 22; 2:42; 8:1; Papias in Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* iii. 39. 15–17; Rom., chaps. 9–11; Matt. 1:1, 22; 2:5, 15, 17, 23; 3:3; 4:14; 21:4, 28–32, 33–46; 22:1–14; 23:29–39; Acts 1:8; 16:35–40; 17:5–9; 18:12–17; 19:31, 33, 37–41; 23:29; 26:24–27, 31, 32

3. Prejudice and Persecution

   Acts 17:6, 7; Phil. 1:12–14; II Tim. 4:14–18; Heb. 11:36—12:11; I Pet. 2:11–17; 4:7, 12–19; Rev. 13:15; 14:8–11; 17:1—18:24; Clem. R., *Cor.* i. 5, 6; Tac. *Ann.* xv. 44; Sueton. *Nero* 16; Cass. Dio *Hist. Rom.* lxvii. 14 f.; Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* iii. 18; Plin. Jun. *Epp.* x. 96, 97; Ignat. *Rom.* 4, 5; Minucius Felix *Octavius* viii. 3–10; Aristides *Apol.* 2, 13, 15, 16

4. The Later Message

   James entire, especially 1:12, 25, 27; 2:8–26; 4:11, 12; Rev., chaps. 2, 3; 14:12; 19:8; 20:12, 13; Heb. 5:8, 9; 10:35, 36; 12:28; I Tim. 4:8; 6:18–21; Jude 3, 20; II Pet. 1:10, 11; 3:11–17; Matt. 28:19, 20; Mark 16:16

5. Opposition and Organization

   Col. 2:8–23; I, II, and III John entire; John 1:1–36; 4:6; 5:19, 30; 7:1; 11:33, 35, 38, 41; 12:27, 49; 14:3, 16–18, 23, 26, 28; 15:26; 19:11, 28; I Tim. 6:3–5; Jude entire; II Peter 2:1—3:16; Rev. 2:6, 14, 15; Ignat. *Smyrn.* 1–7; *Trall.* 9–11; Iren. *Adv. Haer.* i. 23, 26; I Cor. 12:28; Acts 20:17, 28; Phil. 1:1; I Tim. 3:1–13; Titus 1:5–9; 3:1, 2; Clem. R., *Cor.* i. 42, 44; *Didache* 7–15; Ignat. *Trall.* 2, 3; *Smyrn.* 8; *Murat. Frag.*

6 Triumph

   I Cor. 2:6–16; 6:15–20; 10:16; Rom. 6:2–14; Col. 2:14, 15; John 1:1–5, 9, 14; 12:35, 36; Tertull. *Adv. Jud.* 7; *Apol. Adv. Gent.* 37; Iren. *Adv. Haer.* 1. 10; Bardesanes, *De Fato*

I. THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM

"Sore anguish will come upon the land and wrath upon this people; they will fall by the edge of the sword, they will be carried prisoners to all nations and Jerusalem will be trodden under the heel of the Gentiles." These words of the Third Gospel written probably within about a decade of the event paint a pathetic picture of the overthrow of a proud people.

The great Jewish revolt against Rome began in 66 A.D. and ended with the complete subjugation of the nation in 73. Jerusalem was captured in 70. Its terrible siege and devastation seemed to the Christians the scourge of God, the punishment of the Jews as a nation for the rejection of their God-sent Messiah in the person of Jesus. They deserted the city just before the siege closed in. When they saw "*the desolating Abomination* spoken of by Daniel the prophet standing where he ought not," when they saw "Jerusalem surrounded by armies," they "fled to the mountains," to the city of Pella in Perea. The other Jews never forgave them for this desertion in the critical hour. It made the breach complete and irrevocable. The "Nazarenes," as the Jews called them, were from this time excluded from the synagogues, and a curse was pronounced against them.

Long before this time the gentile Christians under Paul's leadership in carrying their message to the Gentiles had thrown off the yoke of the "mother-church," but its influence was still felt to a considerable extent, and the Jewish Christians still felt themselves to be a part of Judaism. The great catastrophe led most of them to break entirely with their ancestral faith. The few that remained loyal to the old Judaizing program became even

more exclusive. They formed a heretical sect known as the Ebionites or "poor men," separated entirely from the regular churches. They regarded themselves as the elect "remnant" of Israel and continued the strictest possible observance of the Mosaic Law. They denied the divinity of Jesus and taught that he was a mere man chosen by God to be Messiah because of his strict observance of the Law. They were especially hostile to Paul, and rejected all the New Testament writings except a special form of the Gospel of Matthew. Their exclusiveness was utterly foreign to the genius of Christianity and growth was impossible. They disappeared entirely soon after the fourth century.

Thus Christianity was forever freed from the danger of being dominated by a powerful mother-church with exclusive Judaistic ideas by which its activities would have been much hindered, or of being divided into two rival factions that might well have been perpetuated into the centuries. Of the Jewish Christians who could not be converted by Paul's logic many were convinced by the terrible logic of the national calamity. From the old Israel with its legalistic exclusiveness came forth a new spiritual Israel destined in a manner not foreseen by the old Hebrew prophets to "bless all nations of the earth." The Messiah was henceforth not for Jews but for men.

2. RECORDS OF THE "GOOD NEWS"

Inasmuch as many writers have undertaken to draw up a narrative of the established facts of our religion just as these have been reported to us by the original eyewitnesses who were in the service of the divine message, and inasmuch as I have carefully investigated them all myself from the very beginning I have

decided to write them out in order for you, most noble Theophilus, that you may know fully the truth of what you have been taught by word of mouth.

These words from the introduction to the Third Gospel give us a general insight into the origin of all the records of the rise of Christianity. They were written to supply a definite demand.

It must not be supposed that the Jerusalem church had been only a hindrance to the Christian message. On the contrary, it had done great service in conserving the message for future ages. The story of Jesus' life and teaching was not for many years put into writing. There would be no demand for written accounts while the original disciples lived and taught, and could easily be interviewed by those who were interested. In consequence, those disciples who were "scattered abroad [from Jerusalem] after the death of Stephen and went everywhere preaching the good news" probably carried with them to other lands a very incomplete story.

If the whole Jerusalem church had been scattered abroad at this early date the probability of the transmission of complete and accurate accounts would have been greatly diminished. The fact that the original Twelve remained at Jerusalem for many years after the death of Jesus gave opportunity for the story of the "good news" to be heard so often from their lips by the second generation that it became more and more complete and in a sense stereotyped. This was what has been called the oral gospel. It was now ready at hand for transmission to permanent written forms.

Since the Twelve taught as eye-witnesses, this oral gospel consisted no doubt of Jesus' most striking sayings

which they remembered and the most interesting incidents of his life beginning, as is intimated by the author of Acts, with his baptism by John and ending with accounts of his Resurrection. This oral gospel was naturally much prized and even after there were written gospel records it was preferred by many people. Papias (born about 70 A.D.) tells of questioning those who had heard any of the Twelve whenever he had an opportunity, "for," he says, "I did not think what was gotten from books would profit me as much as what came from the living and abiding voice."

The sayings were most prized at first as being authoritative instruction in Christian living but were not as easily remembered as the incidents, and in consequence men who heard them repeated by one of the Twelve were more likely to write some of them down either for their own edification or that of friends. In this way various isolated groups of sayings would become current. After a while attempts were naturally made to collect these groups of sayings and put them together in an orderly manner for the use of inquirers

As has been stated above (p. xix) Papias says that "Matthew wrote the *logia* [sayings of Jesus] in Hebrew [i.e., Aramaic] and everyone interpreted them as he was able." Of the Twelve, Matthew was probably best fitted to do this work because of his experience as a tax-collector, in which capacity he of course used writing in making necessary lists and notations of payments. This collection of sayings was used as the chief source for Jesus' words by the authors of our First and Third gospels. It is usually referred to as "the *Logia*." The original work disappeared early, probably because

it soon came to be used only in translation and was almost if not entirely incorporated into the Greek gospel written later, which because of that fact came to be known as "the Gospel according to Matthew."

After the complete breaking-up of the Jerusalem church in consequence of the siege and destruction of the city, the need for definite and complete written accounts of the gospel story would become imperative, as so many Christians would have no access to eye-witnesses. When Peter, the recognized leader of the original Twelve, passed away there would arise a demand for the story as he had told it, and his well-known disciple John Mark would naturally be the man to write it. In this way, as is confirmed by Papias, came to be written the earliest gospel narrative that has come to us (our Mark) and that which was used either directly or indirectly by all subsequent gospel writers, especially by the authors of our First and Third gospels.

This account of Jesus' life was evidently written for the simple purpose of recording the story so that it might be used by Christian missionaries in making converts. In all probability Mark made some use of the oral gospel to supplement his recollections of Peter's discourses and arranged his material as far as he could in chronological order. Naturally most emphasis was placed where Peter probably placed it, on Jesus' wonderful deeds as most interesting material for missionary work. Mark's gospel, therefore, is not an argument; it is a simple narration of the gospel story, largely as the author received it from the chief eye-witness and as he himself believed it. In consequence, it was exceedingly well adapted to the needs of the early preachers, and, being regarded as

authoritative because of its coming from Peter, it became the basis of other accounts.

One of the most pressing problems of the early Christians was the attitude of the Jews toward Christianity. Jesus was the long-promised Messiah of the Jews and yet the Jewish people had rejected him before his death and were not accepting him even now after his messiahship had been divinely demonstrated by his Resurrection. Gentiles were flocking into the Kingdom in ever increasing numbers, but "the sons of the Kingdom" were not only holding aloof but were extremely antagonistic. Were the prophets right? Was Jesus really the Messiah of the Jews? Paul in his letter to the Romans had attempted to answer this question by asserting that the Jewish attitude was only temporary and that "all Israel" would accept Christianity "when the great mass of the Gentiles came in." Since Paul's time, however, the Jews had become even more hostile and Paul's solution seemed more and more improbable.

The destruction of Jerusalem offered the key to this problem, and the idea came to a Jewish Christian leader to make use of it in an elaborate and conclusive argument for Jesus' messiahship. This argument he clothed in the form of a gospel narrative. He used the *Logia* of the apostle Matthew and the Gospel of Mark together with an account of the infancy period and wrote as complete a story as possible to show that Jesus was the God-sent Messiah of Old Testament prophecy, that he had been wilfully rejected by the Jews and in consequence God had punished them by destroying their city and had taken the Kingdom from them and given it to the Gentiles. Henceforth it was to be a universal Kingdom in which

"all nations" were to have equal privileges. This gospel (our Matthew) became so popular that it was for a long time known as "the gospel" and took precedence over Mark which in consequence was almost lost to posterity.

About the same time that Matthew was written but probably in a different part of the Christian world a Greek disciple, generally believed to be "Luke, the beloved physician," the well-known companion of Paul, noted the incomplete character of the many accounts of Jesus' life and sayings that were current among the gentile Christians. Having had large opportunity for gathering data and a great interest in the work, he decided to write a complete and well-arranged account for the purpose of giving to the Gentiles and especially to those in authority such a record as would commend Christianity to them as the true universal religion. With this in view he made a "careful investigation of all things from the very beginning" and wrote his gospel probably without any knowledge of our Matthew. He traced Jesus' ancestry back not to Abraham but to Adam, and emphasized the universal and humanitarian character of his deeds and messages. Because of his more historical purpose he arranged the sayings of Jesus according to time and place, as was probably done to some extent in the *Logia*, rather than topically as is done in Matthew.

Some time after this the same author with practically the same general purpose wrote another volume (Acts) to show how the "good news," "beginning at Jerusalem," spread through "all Judea and Samaria and to the uttermost parts of the earth" and to commend Christianity to the Roman governmental authorities. He aimed also to checkmate the calumnies of the Jews by relating

the harmless and beneficent history of the movement and calling attention to the fact that while its great advocate, Paul, had been ill-treated and vilified by the Jews he had invariably been pronounced innocent and protected by the Roman officials.

Thus were preserved for posterity remarkably complete records of the origin of Christianity and its progress to the time it had been carried over most of the civilized world.

3. PREJUDICE AND PERSECUTION

"These upsetters of the whole world," the characterization of Paul and Silas and their companions by the Thessalonian mob in 50 A.D., gives the keynote to the attitude of the people toward the early Christians. One of the greatest obstacles they had to overcome was the prejudice that arose from ignorance and misconception of their ideals and practices. Like the Jews, who were always unpopular, but in a still greater degree, they were a "peculiar people," and the world has always hated non-conformity and ridiculed the unconventional. Every department of life was permeated with the worship of the heathen gods and in consequence the Christians could not participate in the established customs of government and society. They could not hold office because all official functions involved performance of heathen rites. Theaters, games, and all kinds of amusement and recreation were affected by impurity and polytheism and were avoided by the Christians as snares of the devil. Thus they came to be regarded as exclusive and unsocial and were hated because of their implied criticism of their neighbors and their "holier

than thou" attitude. Their anticipation of the immediate coming of the Messiah made them careless of social conditions.

The popular charges against the Christians may be summarized as follows:

1. *Atheism or sacrilege.*—This has always been popularly regarded as the most heinous of crimes. The Christians did not worship any of the gods that everybody else worshiped. As they offered no sacrifices and had no altars or images, outsiders could not understand how they could have any gods of their own. The cry of the mobs against them was "Away with the atheists." In times of calamity they were blamed for bringing down the wrath of the gods on account of their impiety, and the natural way to appease the gods was to punish those who had given offense. "They think the Christians to blame for every public calamity, for every hurt that touches the people," says Tertullian. "If the sky stands still [does not fall down in rain], if the earth moves, if there is famine or plague, immediately the shout is raised 'To the lions with the Christians!'"

2. *Sedition or treason.*—Their secret meetings under cover of darkness, their references to a great coming cataclysm, the destruction of the present order and the ushering in of the Kingdom of God and their recognition of a law superior to that of the Empire, gave color to this charge, and their refusal to participate in the national emperor-worship was regarded as proof.

3. *Disturbance of economic conditions.*—As in the case of Paul's work at Ephesus, Christianity interfered with the financial interests of multitudes who made their living from the sale of shrines, images, sacrificial animals, and

food for these animals as well as for the priests and their multitudinous attendants.

4. *Disturbances of the peace.*—This was the charge brought against Paul. "We have found this man a perfect pest," his accusers declared before the Roman governor at Caesarea. The Christians were indefatigable proselyters, and the conversions broke up families and disrupted social conditions.

5. *Licentiousness.*—This seems to us to be a strange charge but it was most insistent. The Christians seemed to be very fond of one another; men and women met together at night, and everything dark and secret was supposed to be base.

6. *Infanticide and cannibalism.*—Some eavesdropper would hear words about "eating flesh and drinking blood." Infants were sometimes taken to the services. Gossip whispered that they were killed and devoured by the initiates.

7. *Magic and witchcraft.*—The Christians claimed to cast out demons. They were accused of being in league with the powers of darkness. The sign of the cross used on all occasions aroused suspicion and fear.

As has been seen, the Christians were at first regarded as Jews. The Jewish religion was recognized as legal by the Roman government and accorded special privileges. The Jews were excused from emperor-worship and military service. These two privileges were very helpful in saving them from collision with the Roman authorities. As soon, however, as the Christian movement began to be recognized as distinct from Judaism, it was regarded with suspicion as a "new superstition" and soon became the object of persecution. The point

at which the Christians came constantly into collision with the Roman authorities and on which all the accusations against them finally came to be based was their persistent refusal to participate in the national emperor worship. This was regarded as a refusal to take the oath of allegiance to the Empire.

The trial of Paul at the world's capital probably did much to bring the Christians to the notice of the imperial authorities as forming a body distinct from the Jews, and the Jews were not slow in seeking to shift their racial unpopularity upon their hated rivals. The first noteworthy persecution began in the city of Rome in 64 A.D. and, while it does not seem to have extended to the provinces, it advertised the Christians throughout the Empire as obnoxious to the government and emphasized the fact that their "superstition" was distinct from Judaism and consequently unprotected. Tacitus describes the punishment of the Christians as so wantonly cruel as to elicit sympathy for them from the population although they were regarded as "criminals and deserving of extreme penalties," and as "enemies of the human race," yet this local persecution may fairly be taken as typical of those that followed intermittently and sporadically in the Empire for about two and a half centuries.

The persecution under Domitian (81–96 A.D.) is noteworthy in that it is vividly reflected in several New Testament writings which date from his reign. Domitian was especially sensitive on the subject of the divine honors he wanted paid to himself. He seems to have taken them seriously and was jealous of the title, *Dominus et Deus*. The Christians, because of their

well-known attitude on this subject, became the special objects of his displeasure.

The disciples to whom the epistle to the Hebrews (*ca.* 85) was addressed were suffering persecution and in danger of surrendering their faith. The purpose of the writer was to keep them faithful by telling them of Christ's pre-eminent glory and trying to convince them that the greatest price they could pay was small in comparison with the eternal reward on the one hand or the fearful consequences of apostasy on the other. He pictures to them a great "cloud of witnesses," or former martyrs, who are looking down upon their similar contest of endurance.

The writer of I Peter (*ca* 90) exhorts those whom he addresses to endure, by referring to the similar sufferings of Christ. He says:

> Do not be surprised at the ordeal that has come to test you as though some foreign experience befell you. You are sharing what Christ suffered, so rejoice and exult when his glory is revealed. If you are denounced for the sake of Christ, you are blessed. . . . . None of you must suffer as a murderer or a thief or a bad character or a revolutionary, but if a man suffers for being a Christian he must not be ashamed, he must rather glorify God for that.

We have here a good indication of the attitude of the Christians toward martyrdom. This was the spirit that finally conquered.

The author of Revelation (*ca.* 95), who wrote to encourage Christians whom he expected soon to be subjected to bitter persecution, in his cryptic language says (referring to the imperial priesthood): "It has everyone put to death who will not worship the statue of the Beast" [the emperor], and he tried to keep them from

apostasy by the dread of even greater torment beyond this life: "Whoever worships the Beast and his statue . . . . shall be tortured with fire and brimstone before the holy angels and before the Lamb, the smoke of their torture rises for ever and ever, and they get no rest from it day and night."

From the persecution under Trajan (98–117 A.D.) there has been preserved correspondence between the famous Roman writer, Pliny the Younger, and the emperor (112 A.D.) which gives us very significant information about the early persecutions, especially as to the character of the Christians (see the quotation on p. xxv) and the attitude of the government. Pliny, who was governor of the province of Bithynia in Asia Minor, writes a letter to Trajan asking his advice as to how to deal with the Christians. He says:

> Meanwhile I have taken this course with those who were accused before me as Christians. I have asked them whether they were Christians. Those who confessed I asked a second and a third time, threatening punishment. Those who persisted I ordered away to execution. . . . . An unsigned paper was presented containing the names of many. But these denied that they were or had been Christians, and I thought it right to let them go, since at my dictation they prayed to the gods and made supplication with incense and wine to your statue, which I had ordered to be brought into the court for the purpose, together with the images of the gods, and in addition to this they cursed Christ, none of which things, it is said, those who are really Christians can be made to do.

In this letter Pliny refers to Christianity as "a perverse and excessive superstition," and says that it affected "many of every age and every rank and even of both sexes," and by reason of it the temples

had been deserted till quite recently. Trajan in reply commends his general course and says that "if they are accused and convicted they must be punished, but he who denies he is a Christian and makes the fact evident by act, that is by worshiping our gods, shall obtain pardon."

This correspondence does not indicate the inauguration of a new policy but a recognition of the general attitude of the government. Christians were regarded as criminals and outcasts beyond the pale of governmental protection. The confession of the name came to be sufficient cause for torture and capital punishment, because it carried with it the implication of treason. In consequence, their treatment depended largely on the temper of the local governor and the attitude of the people of the community. This condition continued for about 150 years from Trajan's time.

What was the attitude of the Christians under these persecutions? We do not find an instance of resistance or retaliation. While there were of course many who recanted, yet in ever increasing numbers they remained firm and "kept the faith" in defiance of the most terrible torture and death. Their only answer to all calumnies, threats, and insults was: "I am a Christian and no evil is done by us." They almost recklessly gloried in the fact that they were deemed worthy to suffer as their Master had done. Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, who suffered martyrdom about 115 A.D., on his way to Rome to die wrote to the church in that city a letter in which he begged that no effort be made to save him. "Rather," he says, "entice the wild beasts. . . . . Let there come upon me fire and cross and struggles with wild beasts,

cutting and tearing asunder, racking of bones, mangling of limbs, crushing of my whole body, cruel tortures of the devil, if I may but attain to Jesus Christ."

This unflinching endurance under cruel torture gave rise to the idea that the martyrs were miraculously sustained and after a time became insensible to pain. This idea, together with their absolute confidence that martyrdom gave an immediate entrance to eternal glory, often caused onlookers to confess and give themselves up voluntarily to a similar fate. While, however, they endured without resistance or retaliation, they naturally conceived an intense hatred for the government that treated them so unjustly. At first they were exhorted by their leaders to honor and obey the government authorities as may be seen in Paul's letters and even in I Peter, where hope is held out that the magistrates may cease to persecute if the Christians exhibit blameless lives. In Revelation, however, the spirit is entirely changed and the Christians are hoping to rejoice over the destruction of the hated tyrant—the "great city," "the woman clothed in purple and scarlet, seated on seven hills," for "in her was found the blood of prophets and saints and of all who were slain upon the earth."

The persecutions not only did not permanently retard the progress of Christianity but in reality they accelerated it. The indomitable courage exhibited by the martyrs attracted the noblest spirits of the age in increasing numbers to the church. People thought there must be something in a religion that produced such heroic fruitage. While written "apologies" were made in the second century, the real answer to all

calumnies, cruelty, and unjustice was the consistent character and pure lives of the rank and file of the Christians themselves. It was this purity of life and evident sincerity of motive that finally won for them the respect and good-will of the great body of men who were honestly looking toward the light.

4. THE LATER MESSAGE

An important result of the efforts of the early Christians to defend themselves against the calumnies of their enemies was a distinct though unconscious modification of the message of Jesus and Paul, making salvation depend upon obedience to law. The old conflict between Judaism and Christianity died out even before the destruction of Jerusalem. The universality of the message which was inherent in Jesus' teaching and for which Paul contended so vigorously was no longer subject to contention. Paul had conquered. Jewish legalism was forever given up by the Christians, but a new Christian legalism arose.

This modification of the free gospel of Jesus and Paul is best seen in the so-called Epistle of James, a Christian homily written probably toward the close of the first century. In it Christianity is represented as a law. "He who speaks evil of his brother," says James, "and judges his brother speaks evil of the law and judges the law" Paul's free spiritual gospel of faith becomes a religion that consists in something to be done. James calls it the "law of liberty" but it consists not in faith or the attitude of filial love which makes a man a son of God but in the strict observance of God's law.

In this conception of Christianity most of the later writings agree. Christians are represented as being

exempt from Jewish law but not from all external law as Paul taught. They are subject to the law of Christianity, regarded as the final revelation of God, which takes the place of the old Law of Moses. Religion does not consist in the recognition of God's fatherhood and in the filial attitude toward him but in "visiting the fatherless and widows and keeping one's self unspotted from the world." Jesus' and Paul's conception of the fatherhood of God is lacking. God again becomes largely the sovereign or king of the Old Testament writings, and salvation is a result of keeping his law.

In Revelation, God is represented as a reigning sovereign, and faith or the filial attitude has become "*the* faith," or the sum of the teachings of Christianity, and the saints are "they who keep God's commands and "the faith of Jesus." In Hebrews, salvation is represented as the result of obedience to "the Son," who "learned by all he suffered how to obey, and by being thus perfected became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him." "Patient endurance," the author says, "is what you need so that as a result of doing the will of God you may get what you have been promised. In I Timothy (*ca.* 110) the young preacher is exhorted to tell his people "to be rich in good deeds in order to secure the life indeed." After enumerating the duties of Christians the author of II Peter (*ca.* 130) says: "If you do these things you will never stumble, but thus you will be given a triumphant admission into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ." In I Timothy and Jude (*ca.* 110) Christianity is conceived of as a well-defined body of doctrine "once for all committed to the saints."

The most striking characteristic of this later message, however, and that which gave it power with the people was not its conception of Christianity as law but as a promise conditioned on obedience to law. It still remained the "good news" of eternal life. The law was merely a means to the attainment of a blessed salvation to be secured by the faithful in the life to come. "Blessed is the man," says James, "who endures under trial, for when he has stood the test he will get the crown of life." II Peter, as we have seen, promises to those who practice the Christian virtues "a triumphant admission into the everlasting kingdom," and this same conception of Christianity, promising eternal life and happiness to those who keep the Christian law or the "commands of Christ," is found also in Hebrews, Revelation, I Timothy, the Appendix to Mark, and the concluding section of Matthew, as well as in I Clement, Ignatius, Polycarp, the *Didache*, and other early patristic writings.

The conception of Christianity thus seen in the later writings of the New Testament was evidently well received. As in the case of the legalistic message of the Judaizers, it seemed much easier to understand than Paul's free spiritual gospel of salvation by faith. The age was not prepared for Paul's idealism. The conception of salvation as a reward for doing the commands of Christ when this meant clean, upright living appealed to the earnest spirits of that age, which was characterized by a reaction against the low morality of the later republic and an impulse toward better living such as is voiced in the writings of later Stoicism, particularly those of Epictetus (*ca.* 100). The message of these later writings of the New Testament was on a lower spiritual plane

than that of Jesus and of Paul, but the difference was not recognized by its preachers and it made a strong appeal to the men of that period as the same "good news" of eternal salvation.

5. OPPOSITION AND ORGANIZATION

"Although I am versed in all mysteries and all knowledge [*gnosis*] but have not love I am nothing," said Paul. These two terms, "mysteries" and "knowledge," suggest the two great rivals of early Christianity —the mystery religions and Gnosticism.

We have noticed how the mystery cults coming from the East sought to satisfy the individual heart-cry of the Hellenistic world for deliverance from sorrow and death and for hope of eternal happiness by means of union with a savior deity. The early Christian preachers had to meet these religions on their own ground and to show that their own message was infinitely superior.

The most dangerous enemy of early Christianity was Gnosticism. The name, derived from the Greek word *gnosis*, meaning knowledge, suggests the form of its appeal.

The theory of the acquisition of knowledge by sense perception only did not satisfy a large number of seekers after truth in the Hellenistic world. Some of the later philosophers began to give the emotions a place in forming a system of epistemology. As soon as this was done, physical and intellectual means of apprehension as being apparently confined in their operation to this world were subordinated to the emotional soul, which seemed to be only temporarily confined in the material body and to be capable of soaring to other worlds if released from

its bodily prison. Thus there arose in Hellenistic philosophy a growing tendency toward mysticism. By a process of syncretism from various oriental mystery religions a selection was made of the elements that seemed best to supply this emotional need. The resulting cult came to be called "Gnosticism" from the claim on the part of its votaries to superior knowledge of man's origin and destiny and the means of his deliverance from evil.

This knowledge was not received through intellectual means but was a miraculous revelation to the initiates through the rites and ceremonies of the cult. The kinship of Gnosticism to the mystery religions is seen in the fact that its fundamental purpose was to secure for the individual soul redemption from evil through mystical union with a mythical savior deity, and its kinship to speculative philosophy from the elaborate speculative system reared on this mystical foundation. All things material were essentially bad and could have no affinity with the spiritual. The supreme deity, therefore, did not create the earth and things material. They were the work of an evil demon referred to as the "Demiurge." This was the solution of the age-long problem of evil. The soul of man was originally a spark of divine essence but by some mishap became imprisoned in matter where it dwelt in misery and from which it could not escape by any exercise of its own powers.

Between the good and evil deities and their numerous attendant spirits was waged a continual warfare for the determination of the soul's destiny. This warfare took place on the earth and in the upper regions through

which the soul must go on its way back to the abode of the good deity from whom it originally emanated. The means of escape from the prison-house of matter was through a mysterious knowledge (*gnosis*) which could be secured only by the initiated. When the soul obtained this knowledge it could free itself from matter, overcome all evil spirits, and rise to the highest heavens by the aid of an emanation from the good god—a savior deity mystically represented as "Light," "Truth," "Wisdom," "Primal Man"—sent down for this purpose.

As a syncretizing cult Gnosticism naturally found in the young and vigorous redemptive religion of Christianity the elements needed to give it concreteness and definite historical setting, and so well did it succeed in appropriating them that for a long time it was supposed to have originated within Christianity itself by a process of affiliation with Greek philosophy and was referred to as a Christian heresy. It made the pre-existent Christ the soul's deliverer and accepted some of the New Testament writings as revelation, but rejected the Jewish element in Christianity and made the God of the Old Testament the Demiurge or evil demon who created matter. It denied the union of Christ with sinful flesh and taught that he occupied the body of the man Jesus only as a temporary abode entering at the baptism and leaving before the Crucifixion, or that he never had a real body but lived on earth and suffered only in appearance. This latter view was called "Docetism" (seeming).

Gnosticism was more dangerous than other enemies in that it was not content to remain outside of Christianity as a distinct cult but sought to appropriate it in such a way as to destroy its identity. The Christian

leaders saw clearly that if the docetic doctrine of their Christ should prevail Christianity would be torn from its historical anchorage and sent adrift on a sea of fanatical speculation and would lose its authoritative ethical appeal to the consciences of men.

Several of the New Testament writers wrote to combat the influence of this subtle rival. Of these by far the greatest was the author of the Fourth Gospel, the little treatise known as I John and probably also the brief letters known as II and III John, all written according to well-authenticated tradition at Ephesus about the end of the first century or the beginning of the second. The writing known as I John has more of the character of a tract than a letter. It was probably intended as a circular letter to be sent with the missionaries who went out over Asia Minor under the author's direction and read by them to the churches. Evidently these churches were afflicted by the teaching of the Gnostics who claimed greater knowledge than the rank and file of Christians, making use as we see from the circular letter of such expressions as "We have fellowship with God," "We are not guilty," "We have not sinned," "We know God," "We remain in him," "We are in the light," etc., probably claiming, as many of the Gnostics did, to be superior to the ordinary laws of morality, being independent of the flesh, despising it and so using it as they pleased.

The letter does not merely condemn the false doctrine but it sets forth clearly what the author considers the true gospel. "Jesus came in the flesh," in reality not in mere seeming (Docetism). While he was the divine Logos and "existed from the very beginning" the writer

testifies that he "was disclosed" to him and that he "heard, saw and touched" him with his own hands. This divine "Word" taught the great principle of love, which is the essence of the Christian religion. The Docetic claim to sinlessness while living an evil life is absolutely false. No man can have fellowship with God who does not "move within the light." "He who says 'I know him' but does not obey his commands is a liar." "He who says he is in the light and hates his brother is in the darkness still." True religion thus consists in loving God and in consequence loving one's fellow-man.

II and III John have practically the same objective. They are very brief letters, one written to individual churches to exhort the members to "love one another" and to warn them against the Docetic impostor who does not acknowledge "that Jesus Christ came in the flesh," and the other to a prominent member of the same church called Gaius to commend him and to warn him against a certain Diotrephes who opposes "the Elder" (as the author calls himself) and will not admit his missionaries to the church. These letters are interesting for the light they throw on the growing necessity for stricter organization such as is advocated so strongly a little later in the pastoral epistles and Ignatius.

Toward the close of the first century when Christianity, having been now for a generation completely severed from Judaism, had become largely a religion of the Greek world, the fact that it was clothed in Jewish dress and used a Jewish vocabulary was felt to be a handicap. Jesus was no longer merely a Jewish messiah but a world-deliverer. The question arose of the value,

and indeed necessity, of translating the Christian message into Greek terms and so giving it a universal language and dress, namely, that of the Greek world.

This urgent need was supplied, in the form of a story of the life and words of Jesus, by the writing known as the "Gospel according to John" in which the author, the great Christian teacher of Asia Minor referred to above, used the three earlier gospels, supplementing and interpreting them. He stated his purpose as being that his readers may "continue to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God, and believing may have life through his name." Evidently there was a tendency for Christians to follow the docetic teachers and to give up their belief in the reality of Jesus' life on earth.

The author of this gospel followed Paul in emphasizing faith in Jesus as the incarnation of the pre-existent Christ but emphasized, as Paul did not, the idea that he possessed and exhibited omniscience and divine power and majesty during his earthly career. He bridged the gulf between Christianity and Greek philosophy by making Jesus the divine Logos (word) who "existed in the very beginning" and came forth from God to men as their deliverer, the emanation from God, the "Life" and "Light" of the Stoic philosophy, and insisted also on his humanity and reality as a corporeal being during his life on earth in opposition to the Docetists who denied that the man Jesus was identical with the heavenly Christ.

In conformity with this purpose Jesus' deeds are reported not as deeds of mercy, as is the case in the Synoptic Gospels, but rather as "signs" of his divinity, and his words are not given, as in the Sermon on the

Mount, from the standpoint of teaching men how to live but from that of demonstrating Jesus' own divine personality and majesty. At the same time the author represents Jesus as really human, subject to and conscious of human weaknesses and limitations. For example, he speaks of him as "exhausted by the journey he sat down by the well" and as saying that "he can do nothing of his own accord, nothing but what he sees the Father doing." Thus he demonstrated that the Jesus of Nazareth of the Synoptic Gospels was identical with the divine Christ of Paul's letters and answered the objections of the gnostic teachers.

This interpretation of the life of Jesus in terms of Greek thought was very successful. It appealed to men of philosophical education and at once secured their attention. It gave concrete historic appeal to their fundamental conception of an abstract emanation from God as an intermediary to bring deliverance to men.

The author also meets two minor difficulties of the early Christians: the question of the delay of Jesus' coming again, which was now beginning to cause doubts in the minds of many Christians, and the claim of the John the Baptist sect that their master was the Messiah. He explains the second coming as having already been fulfilled in the coming of the Spirit and represents John as distinctly denying that he himself was the Messiah.

Another Christian teacher by the name of Jude, about the beginning of the second century, wrote a scathing polemic in the customary form of a letter against the docetic Christians, especially those who claimed to be so spiritual that they could indulge in immorality with impunity. About a generation after this time

another writer incorporated almost the whole of Jude's writing into a letter which is known to us as II Peter. His reference to Paul's letters as "Scripture" and his use of the other New Testament books mark his work as the last of the New Testament writings. As about one hundred years had passed since Jesus' life on earth some Christians were beginning to doubt and were asking: "Where is his promised coming?" The author of II Peter wrote to strengthen the faith of his readers in the second coming and to denounce gnostic Christians of the same type as those of Jude's days for their skepticism and immorality.

The urgency of presenting a solid front against these divisive forces within and without the church was no doubt the leading motive of the first great advance in organization, as is indicated by Ignatius (bishop of Antioch, 110–17) who says: "Avoid divisions as the beginning of evils. See that you all follow your bishop, as Jesus Christ follows the Father, and the presbyters as you would the apostles and pay respect to the deacons as a commandment of God."

It is true that there had long been a tendency in this direction. As has been noticed before (chap. vii), while there were no regularly appointed leaders or officers in the first communities the need of them soon began to be felt and even in the first community at Jerusalem seven men were chosen to "serve tables," or look after the temporal affairs of the congregation. The earliest gentile churches established by Paul, however, do not seem to have had regular officers although the older men ("presbyters") no doubt acted informally as advisers. If there had been authoritative officials he would in all

probability have mentioned them, especially in his letters to the Galatians and Corinthians. The leaders he mentions—"apostles, prophets, and teachers"—were evidently such by virtue of special gifts of the Spirit and not by official election or appointment.

Even in Paul's farewell address to the "presbyters" or elders of Ephesus he speaks of their being made "overseers" (bishops) by the Holy Spirit. These were probably the older and more faithful members who came to be recognized as "overseers" by reason of their qualifications and faithful service. This development was of course a step in the direction of official recognition, and in one of Paul's latest letters (Philippians) he addresses in his salutation two classes, "overseers and servants," as distinct from the Christians in general. The Greek words he uses to designate these classes are those from which the English terms "bishops" and "deacons" are derived. These two classes soon came to be officially chosen and recognized as leaders in the churches.

The need for such official leaders was increasingly felt as the "eyewitnesses," those who had "seen the Lord," one after another passed away, and as those who claimed direct inspiration of the Spirit became fewer or were suspected of fraud, as is indicated in *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, written in the early part of the second century. Probably the first need was that to which reference has already been made—the collection and distribution of alms, which was an essential part of worship. The proper conduct of church worship, especially of the Lord's Supper, as well as the administration of teaching and discipline, called for competent leadership as soon as

the spirit-guided "apostles, prophets, and teachers" of Paul's time had passed away.

At first there were two classes of officials, overseers or "bishops," chosen from the "presbyters" referred to above, and servants or "deacons." About the beginning of the second century, however, as is seen in the letters of Ignatius (115 A.D.), one of these bishops in each congregation came to be chosen as the leader and was given the title of bishop exclusively, while the others remained simply presbyters. Thus arose the office of monarchical bishop, the chief value of which, as Ignatius indicates, was a defense against division.

This growing tendency toward organization is seen in the pastoral epistles, I and II Timothy and Titus, written probably about the beginning of the second century. A devout follower of Paul saw the need for authoritative instruction in choosing church officers, checking religious speculation, and giving specific instruction in Christian living, in view of the delay of Jesus' coming. He probably made use of some brief personal letters of Paul and amplified them with such specific teaching as he believed Paul would have given under the then-existing conditions.

Another important result of these struggles, especially that against Gnosticism, was the development of the New Testament canon. During the first century the only sacred writings or "Scriptures" recognized by the Christians were those of the Old Testament. These constituted the Bible of the early church and were so quoted by preachers and teachers and read in the assemblies. The words of Jesus were quoted as of equal authority with the Old Testament but not from any definite, recognized source. The letters of the apostles

were read in the churches for edification and instruction but not designated as "Scripture." The Gnostics, however, repudiating the Old Testament and claiming that the apostles of Christ had all authority and inspiration, forged a number of writings in support of their doctrines for which they claimed apostolic authorship. The Christians had to meet the challenge. They began to make lists of the writings regarded as genuine, proceeding largely on the basis of apostolic authorship or immediate connection with an apostle, as in the case of the Gospels of Mark and Luke. When these lists of sacred writings came to be generally recognized later, they corresponded very nearly to our present New Testament and formed a strong bulwark of defense for historical Christianity.

6. TRIUMPH

"We give utterance to 'wisdom' among those who are able to apprehend it but it is not the wisdom of this world nor of its rulers, who will soon come to nothing. No, we give utterance to the wisdom of God contained in a 'mystery' which has been kept hidden and which God decreed before the world began so that it should result in glory for us." "The Logos existed in the very beginning with God. Through him all existence came into being. In him was Life and this Life was the Light for men." These words of Paul and the author of the Fourth Gospel suggest Christianity's method of approach in the struggle which resulted in the conquest of its rivals in the Hellenistic world.

We have seen how Jesus brought to men a unique message of the fatherhood of God with all the blessings

which that relationship implies; how this message was rejected by the pharisaic legalistic leaders of the Jews but was burned into the hearts of a number of chosen disciples; how his disciples after his Crucifixion at the hands of his enemies, though at first they fled in consternation, soon became convinced that he had triumphed over death and was now their divinely appointed Lord and the Messiah of prophesy who would return in glory to establish on earth the everlasting Kingdom of God; how when his return was delayed they came to believe that it was their part to prepare for it by bringing all their countrymen to repentance and belief in his messiahship; how when this message was spurned, they "turned to the Gentiles" under their new cosmopolitan leader, the last but the greatest of the apostles; how the new message, after a painful struggle with legalism, was completely severed from Judaism and set free to work out its destiny in the Hellenistic world; and finally, we have seen how it had to contend for its existence against the prejudices of the people of the day, the Roman government, rivals from without and false friends from within. What were the determining factors in its final triumph over these opposing forces in the Hellenistic world?

The hope for success in such a struggle would naturally be in the ability of the Christian message to meet more effectively than was done by its rivals the needs of men who were seeking for salvation from the ills of this life and especially for assurance of a blessed immortality. In adjusting itself to meet these demands Christianity found in Paul an able, versatile, and sympathetic leader who marked out a well-defined path for his successors and, without any such intention on his

part, left in his letters to his various churches marvelously complete instructions for them to follow when he had to leave his task unfinished.

Other leaders arose who while they did not, as we have seen, keep the Christian message on Paul's high plane yet followed his idea of becoming "all things to all men" in the good sense in which he used that expression. They believed that Christianity was the full fruitage of God's plan for saving men from sin and death and that in consequence it contained all the elements necessary to satisfy all legitimate aspirations of mind and heart. Were their hearers devotees of mystery religions? They were told of the real "mystery which had been kept secret hitherto and which God had decreed before the world began," and which could now be revealed to the initiated. Did they believe that salvation must come from union with a savior deity? They were told how to become united with a savior who, instead of being an ancient fantastical creation of the imagination, was a well-authenticated historical person who had lived on earth in recent times, suffered and died and now lived again in glory at God's right hand, a loving sympathizer and all-powerful deliverer. Did they long for thrilling emotional experience as evidence of union with deity? They were pointed to the well-known ecstatic experience of the Christian converts who were "all filled with the Holy Spirit" and "spoke as the Spirit gave them utterance." Did they believe that union with the deity was attained through sacred rites or sacraments? They were offered Christian baptism in which the initiate "died to sin," was "buried with Christ and raised with him to live and move in a new sphere

of life," and assured that this experience was constantly renewed in the mystical partaking of his very nature in "the communion of the body and blood of Christ." Were they seekers after "wisdom"? They were told of "God's wisdom which none of the rulers of this world knew." Did they fear evil spirits? Christ had conquered them all; they fled at the mention of his name. Were they attracted by ethical teaching and purity of life? They were given the pure precepts of Jesus and told that as "temples of the Holy Spirit" the initiates must live in conformity with this teaching. In a true sense Christianity became all things to all men.

Nevertheless, there were some to whom this adaptation of the message did not make such a strong appeal. These were the "intellectuals" of that day who were not completely satisfied by the mysteries but were seeking salvation through philosophy. To meet these needs Christianity produced, as we have seen above, another great teacher in the author of the Fourth Gospel. He presented Jesus as the incarnation of the pre-existent "Logos" or divine reason of the Stoic philosophy. The terms "Life," "Light," "Truth," and "Knowledge," the subjects of so much philosophical speculation in the search after religious values, were given new content and concrete appeal by identification with the "Logos" that "came in the flesh and lived for a time among us so that we saw his glory—the glory as of the only son of God."

The work of these two great leaders while adapting the message of Christianity to meet the needs of the time preserved the true spirit of its founder and it finally prevailed over all obstacles because, as has been seen

(chaps. iv and ix), it gave men "power to become sons of God" and so satisfied the deepest and most abiding yearnings of the human heart. It thus offered fellowship with God, the universal Father, and in consequence emancipation from the sense of guilt, or, in other words, forgiveness of sins, emancipation from the power of evil habit or the achievement of moral character, and assurance of life after death with release from the sense of emptiness that comes when nothing is seen beyond the grave. All these blessings were verified and exhibited in the lives of the early Christians, and Christianity became "known by its fruits," thus establishing its claim for recognition as the most complete revelation of the will of the universal Father of men.

Thus the triumph of Christianity as a world-religion was practically assured in the early part of the second century, although it was not until two centuries later that it was formally recognized as a legal religion and its ascendancy over all other religions finally assured in its adoption by the emperor. Soon afterward it was decreed to be the only legal religion of the Empire, and thus, in a manner not anticipated by its founder, the Kingdom of God was established on earth. In another sense, however, and surely that which Jesus had in mind, was established and still lives, ever increasing in extent and vitality, a world-wide community of men and women inspired by his spirit and ideals and bound together by the belief that they are all children of one all-wise, all-powerful, and all-loving Father, whose will is their supreme guide of life—the community of the "Sons of Light," the "Body of Christ," the "Kingdom of God."

SUPPLEMENTARY READING

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2. Case, *Evolution of Early Christianity*, pp. 166–94, 223–38, 331–69.
3. McGiffert, *A History of Christianity in the Apostolic Age*, pp. 440–672.
4. Kent, *Work and Teachings of the Apostles*, pp. 238–99.
5. Walker, *History of the Christian Church*, pp. 33–59.
6. Case, in Smith, *Guide to the Study of the Christian Religion*, pp. 289–314.
7. Lake, *The Stewardship of Faith*, pp. 58–167.
8. Goodspeed, *The Story of the New Testament*, pp. 1–139.
9. Pfleiderer, *Primitive Christianity*, III, 101–41.
10. Dobschütz, *Christian Life in the Primitive Church*, pp. 251–308.
11. Hodges, *The Early Church*, pp. 30–93.
12. Moore, *The New Testament in the Christian Church*, pp. 3–33.

APPENDIX I

OUTLINE OF A BOOK TO BE WRITTEN BY THE STUDENT

As has been indicated in the Preface, it is very desirable that the student should put the results of his study into definite form. To aid him in so doing the following outline is given. It is intended to be suggestive rather than final. To this end the content of each chapter is not formally analyzed but merely suggested.

INTRODUCTION. THE RECORDS OF THE RISE OF CHRISTIANITY

Apocalyptic writings; the New Testament; non-Christian writings; the church Fathers.

CHAPTER I. THE DAY OF UNIVERSAL EMPIRE

Political world-conditions; facilities for travel; language; Rome's attitude toward her dependencies.

CHAPTER II. RELIGION AND MORALITY IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE

Polytheism and nationalistic religions; emperor-worship; Greek philosophy; mystery religions; morals.

CHAPTER III. PALESTINE

Geographical position; topography; climate and products; people and language.

CHAPTER IV. POLITICAL CONDITIONS IN PALESTINE

Hellenism; the Maccabean revolt; the period of independence; transition to Roman rule; Herod the Great; political divisions in the time of Jesus.

CHAPTER V. JUDAISM

Distinguishing characteristics of the Jewish religion; sects and parties; messianism; the Dispersion.

CHAPTER VI. JOHN THE BAPTIST

Personality; message; use of baptism; relation to Jesus; imprisonment and death; contribution to Christianity.

CHAPTER VII. ADVENT OF JESUS

Family and home life; preparation; call; temptation.

CHAPTER VIII. THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Origin of the term; its significance in the Old Testament and other Jewish literature; popular view at the time of Jesus; Jesus' conception; his solution of the great national problem of his countrymen.

CHAPTER IX. JESUS' WORK IN GALILEE

Calling the disciples; a typical day's work; healing diseases and casting out demons; popularity.

CHAPTER X. JESUS' TEACHING

God and his relation to man; man's relation to God; man's relation to his fellow-man.

CHAPTER XI. OPPOSITION FROM JEWISH LEGALISM

Charges brought against Jesus; real cause of the opposition; pharisaic legalism; effect of the opposition; the crisis.

CHAPTER XII. THE PERIOD OF RETIREMENT

Farewell to the Galilean cities; reason for seeking privacy; in Phoenicia and the Decapolis region; Caesarea Philippi and messiahship.

CHAPTER XIII. JESUS' LAST JOURNEY

His "face set to go to Jerusalem"; teaching on the way; work in Perea; public declaration of messiahship.

CHAPTER XIV. JESUS IN JERUSALEM

Conflict with the Jewish authorities; warnings against rejection; arrest; trial; Crucifixion.

CHAPTER XV. THE RESURRECTION

Flight of the disciples; the rebirth of faith; evidence of Resurrection; why they returned to Jerusalem.

CHAPTER XVI. THE FIRST COMMUNITY OF DISCIPLES

Meeting of the 120; conviction of the Spirit's presence; Pentecost and the "tongues"; message of the first disciples; how the community was governed; beginning of organization.

CHAPTER XVII. CONFLICT WITH JUDAISM

Attitude of the disciples to Judaism; cause of Jewish opposition; Stephen's activity; his position; his martyrdom.

CHAPTER XVIII. FROM JEW TO CHRISTIAN

Cause of separation; position of the Hellenistic as compared with that of the Palestinian disciples; the first steps; the Antioch church; the first "Christians."

CHAPTER XIX. ORIGIN AND PREPARATION OF PAUL

Time and place of birth; family and early life; education; career as a persecutor.

CHAPTER XX. PAUL'S CALL AND COMMISSION

Influences toward conversion; the vision and commission; the retirement.

CHAPTER XXI. PAUL'S "GOSPEL"

Righteousness and faith; justification; redemption; reconciliation; social relations.

CHAPTER XXII. PAUL'S PRELIMINARY WORK AND FIRST MISSIONARY CAMPAIGN

Damascus and Jerusalem; Syria and Cilicia; Antioch; Cyprus and Galatia.

CHAPTER XXIII. OPPOSITION FROM CHRISTIAN LEGALISM

The Judaizers; the Jerusalem conference; Peter at Antioch, the trouble in the Galatian churches.

CHAPTER XXIV. PAUL'S SECOND AND THIRD CAMPAIGNS AND IMPRISONMENT

Macedonia and Achaia; Ephesus and Corinth; Jerusalem and Caesarea; Rome.

CHAPTER XXV. CHRISTIANITY AND THE ROMAN GOVERNMENT

The destruction of Jerusalem and its result for Christianity; attitude of Rome and its cause; the persecutions; the conduct of the Christians under persecution; the result.

CHAPTER XXVI. PREJUDICE AGAINST CHRISTIANITY

Popular charges against the Christians; attacks from pagan writers; the apologists; the real answer of Christianity.

CHAPTER XXVII. CHRISTIANITY'S RIVALS

The mystery religions; Gnosticism, its origin and relation to Christianity; Marcion.

CHAPTER XXVIII. CHRISTIANITY'S TRIUMPH

Heresies; the growing tendency toward organization; the origin of church officers; the origin of the canon; reasons for Christianity's success.

APPENDIX II

SPECIAL TOPICS FOR CLASSROOM DISCUSSION OR ASSIGNED PAPERS

The library references for these topics should be selected by the teacher from the Bibliography given in Appendix III. The order of usefulness for undergraduates is indicated in the "Supplementary Readings" at the end of each chapter.

INTRODUCTION

1. The Synoptic Problem.
2. The Authorship and Trustworthiness of Acts.

CHAPTER I

1. Emperor-Worship.
2. Relation of the Mystery Religions to Christianity

CHAPTER II

1. Scribism.
2. The Synagogue and Its Influence on Christian Worship.

CHAPTER III

1. The Relation of Jesus to Judaism and to John the Baptist.
2. The Miracles of Jesus.

CHAPTER IV

1. Jesus' Solution of the National Problem of the Jews.
2. The Messianic Consciousness of Jesus.

CHAPTER V

1. Jesus and the Pharisees.
2. The Perean Ministry.

CHAPTER VI

1. The Trials of Jesus.
2. Jesus' Place in Early Christianity.

CHAPTER VII

1. Were There Appearances in Jerusalem?
2. Evidences of the Resurrection.

CHAPTER VIII

1. Stephen's Relation to Judaism.
2. Causes of the Break with Judaism.

CHAPTER IX

1. The Chronology of Paul's Life.
2. Paul's "Gospel" Compared with That of Jesus.

CHAPTER X

1. The North and South Galatian Theories.
2. Was There a Second Roman Imprisonment?

CHAPTER XI

1. Life in the Pauline Churches.
2. Were the Members of the Christ Party of Corinth Judaizers?

CHAPTER XII

1. Logos Christianity.
2. The Relation of Gnosticism to Christianity.

APPENDIX III

A WORKING BIBLIOGRAPHY

The following list includes besides those already cited additional books for the use of the teacher. These additional works are generally more technical or less adapted to the use of undergraduates than those named in the "Supplementary Reading" at the end of each chapter. The teacher will find here material from which to select references when assigning the special topics given in Appendix II. Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*, *Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels*, *Dictionary of the Apostolic Church*, and *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* may also be frequently consulted with profit.

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APPENDIX IV

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

175–164 B.C. Antiochus Epiphanes
170–65 B.C. *The Book of Enoch*
167 B.C. Maccabaean revolt
166–161 B.C. Judas Maccabaeus
165 B.C. Reconsecration of the Temple
ca. 140 B.C. *Sibylline Oracles*, iii
65–45 B.C. *Psalms of Solomon*
63 B.C. Judea becomes subject to Rome
37–4 B.C. Herod the Great
31 B.C.–14 A.D. Augustus
ca. 10 B.C. *The Assumption of Moses*
6 B.C. Birth of Jesus
4 B.C.–6 A.D. Archelaus
4 B.C.–39 A.D. Herod Antipas
6–15 A.D. Annas, high priest
14–37 A.D. Tiberius
18–36 A.D. Caiaphas, high priest
26–36 A.D. Pontius Pilate
27 A.D. Baptism of Jesus
29 A.D. The Crucifixion
30–40 A.D. Gamaliel I
35 A.D. Paul's conversion
37–41 A.D. Caligula
38–46 A.D. Paul in Syria and Cilicia
41–44 A.D. Herod Agrippa I
41–54 A.D. Claudius
44 A.D. Martyrdom of James, son of Zebedee
47–48 A.D. Paul's first campaign
48 A.D. Jerusalem conference
49–51 A.D. Paul's second campaign, I, II Thess.
50–100 A.D. Herod Agrippa II
ca. 50 A.D. Matthew's *Logia*
51 A.D. Galatians
52–56 A.D. Paul's third campaign, I, II Cor., Rom.
54–68 A.D. Nero
56 A.D. Paul's arrest at Jerusalem
56–58 A.D. Paul's imprisonment at Caesarea
59–61 A.D. Paul's imprisonment at Rome, Philem., Col., Eph., Phil., II Tim. (in part)
61 A.D. Paul's martyrdom
64 A.D. Neronian persecution. Martyrdom of Peter
66 A.D. Rebellion of the Jews against Rome

ca. 67 A.D. Birth of Polycarp
69–79 A.D. Vespasian
70 A.D. Destruction of Jerusalem
ca. 70 A.D. Gospel of Mark
ca. 75 A.D. Gospels of Matthew and Luke, Josephus' *Wars*
ca. 80 A.D. Acts
93 A.D. Josephus' *Antiquities*
81–96 A.D. Domitian
85–96 A.D. Domitian's persecution, Heb., I Pet., Rev.
ca. 95 A.D. I Clement, James
98–117 A.D. Trajan
ca. 100 A.D. I, II, III John, Gospel of John
ca. 110 A.D. Pastoral epistles (in present form), Jude
112 A.D. Pliny's correspondence with Trajan
ca. 115 A.D. Epistles of Ignatius
117 A.D. Tacitus' *Annals*
ca. 130 A.D. II Pet., Papias' *Expositions*, *Didache*

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